

Theatrum Triumphans
OR A
DISCOURSE
OF
PLAYS.

showing the lawfulness and excellent use of
Drammaticque Poesy, and vindicating the
Stage from all those groundless Calumnies and
misrepresentations, wherewith it is aspersed.

wherein all *Scruples* are removed, and the vain
objections of *Histro-maicks* and others fully
Answered and confuted, their mistaken *Allegati-*
ons of *Scripture* and *Fathers* discovered, and
their pretended *Reasons* manifested to be no-
thing but their *Passions*.

Written by the Learned
Sir RICHARD BAKER, Kt.

*Comici finis est humane mores posse, aequosque
Hicrom ad Furiam.*

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To the READER.

Courteous Reader,

 I length thou art presented
with a small Piece, which
for many years hath been
buried with its Renowned Authour.
It appeared not till now, knowing very
well, that this late World hath been fit-
ter for Bedlam, then for sober, and
Rational Discourses. The Authour
wants not evidence for what he speaks,
(though speak what he would; if he
named a Stage Play, he was sure to
meet with a Momus in every corner)

A 2

but

To the Reader.

but some things have the ill luck to be condemned, before they are heard. Well (Reader) seeing we are (by the providence of Heaven) so happy, as to be allowed the use of our own Eyes, and Reason again; Be as thou oughtest to be, a Reader, before a Judge. For to condemn the innocent, is equally to be condemned, with acquitting the guilty. The noble Authour of this Book seems fairly to design nothing more, then Truth, and especially in clearing the Sense of those two great Luminaries of the Church, Saint Cyprian, and Tertulian, his Master, in his Book De Spectaculis, wherein his principal design only is, to cry out against, and severely to condemn the mixtures of Idolatry with their publick Shews: some intentions there were of annexing the
Treatise

To the Reader.

Treaties of Tertullian, and Saint Cyprian, both to this Discourse; that every man might see, what the Author of this Book saw in them: But, for some reasons, that labour is respited. It is very well known what Satyrical Invectives are thundred out against the Theatre, but their just Reasons are not yet produced; it may be, they are reserved for the second Volume of Hiltio-Mastix: Indeed some may be seen against the abuses of it, from which to reason against the thing it self, would ingender a consequence of such large extent, that we must eat our words, or be weary of our lives. For if we sit down by such a Conclusion, that things are unlawfull in their use, because unlawfully abused, we must neither eat, nor drink,
nor

To the Reader.

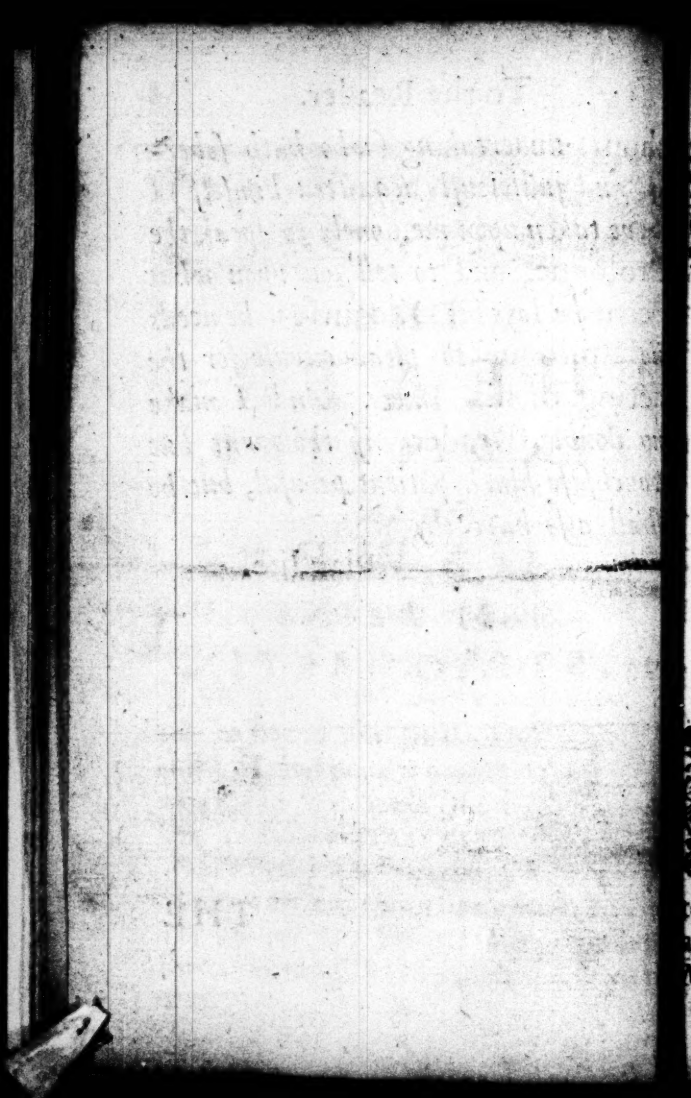
nor sleep, nor wear Cloaths, because in all these, and many more, the badness of mankind is such, that it prompts them to unexcusable exorbitancies, and debaucheries. Good men have founded much of their Rhetorick, and their loudest Declamations against Stage-Plays, upon what others had formerly said against them, rather out of a sequacious credulity corresponding with what others have Magisterially determined, then a due attendency either to the Principles of right Reason, or Scripture Authority, which ought to cast the scales, and put greater obligations upon the Consciences of reasonable Creatures, then the Conjectures or Opinions of the gravest Mortals. But I must not forget my self, and enter upon Apologies for this learned Authors

To the Reader.

thours undertaking (who hath soberly, and judiciously acquitted himself) I have taken upon me, onely to speak the Prologue, and to tell you upon what Scene he lays his Discourse: he needs no Epilogue to plead excuse for the acting of his Part: And I make no doubt, Reader, if thou wilt but vouchsafe him a patient perusal, but he shall also have thy

Plaudite.

THE





THE
THEATRE
VINDICATED,
OR AN
ANSWER
TO M^r. PRINS
HISTRIOMASTIX.



Ho hath not heard of Sr.
Francis Walsingham, an Emi-
nent Councillour in *Queen*
ELIZABETH'S Time, fa-
mous for his *Wisdom* in mat-
ters of *State*; and more for his *Piety* in
advancing the *Gospel*? yet this was the
Man, that procured the *Queen* to enter-
tain

tain *Players* for her *Servants*; and to give them *Wages*, as in a just *Vocation*. And would he ever have done this, being so religious a Man, if he had thought *Plays* to be *prophane*; being so great a *States-man*, if inconvenient to the *State*? And now, me thinks, I have said enough in defence of *Plays*.

But because not onely the *Wiseſt Men* are sometimes *miſtaken*, and the Truth may be found amongſt the meanest (*Sæpe etiam eſt Olitor valde opportuna loquutus*) It will be fit to lay aſide all conſideration of the *Persons*, that ſpeak; and onely to take into conſideration, and weigh the *Reasons*, that are delivered.

It is true, Mr. *Prin* is *Plaintiff* and it is a great advantage, that an *Accuſer* hath over a *Defender*: not onely in that, he ſpeaks *fiſt*, which gets a poſſeſſion, as it were, of the hearer's *Hearts*; but becauſe he hath commonly the pretenſe of ſome *notorious Crime* for his *Foundation*, upon which every man naturally is apt to caſt a *Stone*: where the *Defender* muſt himſelf alone not onely

pull down the *Building*, and rase the *Foundation*; but vindicate also both the *Natural*, and the *acquired* Inclination, and prejudice of the *Hearers*. And especially, the *Accuser* hath this advantage, when he meets with a *Common Place* of some *Vice* to run upon: for then he goes away amain with it; and bears down all before him, with *O Tempora! O Mores!* But most especially, if the pretended *Vice* may seem to trench upon *Religion*: for then the *Defender* is scarce heard speak for the multitude of voices, that are crying out even in *Heathenish* Devotions; *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*: that whatsoever can be alledged, in *defence*, out of *Reason*, is presently beaten back without reason.

But, leaving these *disadvantages* to take their fortunes, and having a clear conscience, that I no way *encroach* upon the *Bounds* of *true Religion*, I am the bolder to enter the *Lists*: yet not so much taking upon me to be a *Champion* of the *Cause*: as onely undertaking to

be a *Wrestler* with the *Writer*. And thus willingly profess, that I *wrestle* not with him, as he is in his own *Person*, for I know him not; and he may be better, then he seems to me: but I *wrestle* with him, onely as he *appears* in his *Book*, which cannot be *fuller of words*, and *emptier of reason*, then it is. And I think it fit to tell, how far his *Book* hath wrought upon me: that where, before the reading it, I took *Plays* onely *de bene esse*, as *being* in use: after the reading it, I found *Plays Bene esse*, and fit to be in use. For his *Arguments* being taken all up upon *trust*; and not so much as weighed, when he took them; now, that he comes to put them off again, are found not onely not to be *weight*, but not to be *Silver*; and so, where he intended, by his *Book*, to bring into detestation the *seeing* of *Plays*: he hath rather brought into estimation the *use* of them. For when a man takes upon him to *prove* a *Matter*: and then either cannot, or doth not prove it sufficiently: it leaves not onely a vehement suspition

on; but a strong conceit in the *Hanvers* minds, that his *Cause* is not good. And as the onely Itch of *Vain-Glory* made many in *Old Time* go out of the Church, and become *Hereticks* in *Divinity*: so the like Itch of *Vain-Glory* makes other men go out of *Humane Society*, and become *Hereticks* in *Morality*. Like *Erastratus*, who burnt the *Temple of Diana* at *Ephesus*, for no other cause, but to be talked of in the World.

His very beginning is very suspicious. For he begins not à *Jove* (as yet *Poets*, whom he taxeth so much, use to do) but à *Diabolo*. He takes his *First Reason* from the Devil: (*Fol. 9.*) He therefore thinks *Plays* unlovely; because they were invented by the Devil: wherein he shews himself to be better acquainted with the Devil, then we are; for we know nothing of it, whether they were of his inventing, or no: and we may marvel how he comes to know it, unless the Devil himself have taught him so: and then it is the more unlikely to be so, seeing The Devil is a Liar, and the Father

of Lies. He will say, perhaps, he had it from *Tertullian*; who tells also, that the *Angels* were cast out of *Heaven* for inventing *Astrologie*: as true in the one, as in the other. It seems, *Tertullian* had no true *Inventory* of the *Devil's Inventions*: yet this man would make us as very *Fools*, as himself, to take all for current, that he hears him say. But what, if we should say, that many things have been *discovered*, and made *known* to Men, even by the *Devil*; which yet are *profitable* to be *known*, and *lawful* to be *used*? Doth not *Lodovicus Vives* affirm, that the *Devil* invented *Logick*? Yet will any man, that hath *Reason*, affirm *Logick* to be *unlawful*? The *Devil* confessed *Christ* to be the *Son of God*; when the *Jews* knew it not, or would not know it: and is this man so very a *Jew*, to think it therefore unlawful to *confess Christ*? And why is it any better *Argument* to say, *The Devil invented it*; therefore it is *Impious*: then to say, *God invented it*; therefore it is *Pious*? And yet who knows not of things *invented* by

Indicated.

by God, which, for their *abuse*, have been rejected? Which he cannot be so forgetful, as to deny, if he do but remember the *Brazen Serpent*. If then a thing *Invented*, and *Instituted* by God, might, being *abused*, be rejected; why may not a thing *Invented*, and *Instituted* by the *Devil*, the *Evil* being removed, be retained? For it is not the *Inventour*, that makes a thing to be good, or evil; but it is the *Conformity*, or *Opposition to the Rule, and Will of God*. Indeed by the *Paw* of this *first Argument* we may see what a kind of *Lyon* we are like to finde in the sequel of his *Discourse*. For where *Tertullian*, and other *Fathers*, prove the *Plays* of the *Heathen* to be all naught, and execrable; because *Idolotrous*, and full of *Superstition*: and thereupon infers, that they were *Inventa Diabolorum*, *Invention of Devils*, as from whom all *Evil* originally doth flow: this man, like a *Crab*, goes backward with their *Reason*, and saith, *Plays were invented by the Devil*; therefore are *execrable*, and *unlawful*: so making that the *Medius Terminus*.

was, or *Proof* of his *Argument*, which they spake onely by way of *Exaggeration*; and making that his *Foundation*, which they laid on as onely a *Superstructure*. And even for the guiltiness of this, you shall see in his *next Argument*, with what a *trick* he seeks to put it off again; and yet is willing to *hold* it still.

For [*Fol. 16.*] Though he cannot perhaps punctually say, that *Plays* were immediately invented by the *Devil*; yet he may truly say, they were invented by *Idolatrous Heathen People*, as the *Devil's Instruments*: which comes much to *One*. But see the Judgment of this man; that sees not what a *Fall* he hath taken by raising this *Argument*; to fall from the *Devil* to *Heathen People*: but well, *Quod dat accipimus*, we take what he lays down. *Plays* were not invented by the *Devil*, but by *Heathen People*: so his *First Argument* is cast out of *Doors* by himself; and will his *second* be served with any better *Sawce*? For can nothing be lawfully used, that hath been invented by *Heathen People*? Let him look in *Polydore Virgil*, and see how

how many things of our daily use have been invented by them; even the *Letters* he writes his *Book* withall. Then he were best go quickly, and finish all his *Book*; lest being written with *Letters*, invented by the *Heathen*, the *Devil* should come, and challenge it to be of his inventing. Here he thinks to mend the matter with saying; that [Fol. 18.] *good things, invented by the Heathen, may lawfully be used, but not bad things, as Plays are:* but must he not first prove *Plays* to be *bad*, before this *Reason* will do him any good? And if he can prove them to be *bad*; they shall then be unlawful as *bad*, but not as *invented* by the *Heathen*: and so this *Reason* would do him no good, though he could make it good.

But though he can fetch no *Argument* against *Plays* from the *Devil's* *Invention*; yet he hath an *Invention* to fetch an *Argument* from him; and this it is: [Fol. 28.] *Plays were at first ordained, and destinated to the immediate Worship, and gratification of Devil-Gods: therefore un-*

lowful; but he hath no sooner made this *Argument*, but he finds fault with it himself; for [Fol. 37.] *so were many of our Churches, which now are converted to Christian uses.* Upon this he replies, and then again *rejoyns*, and plays at *fast and loose*, goes in and out so often in it, that it were but to run a *Wilde-Goose Chase*, to offer to follow him. Yet I cannot let pass one subtile part, he plays at parting; where he saith, [Fol. 40.] that *He for his part thinks it impossible, that ever Plays should be reformed; for who should do it? Good men will not; they rather wish their ruine, then their uselesse welfare: Bad men will not, because they delight in their pleasing Corruptions.* And so he concludes them to be desperate, and past all hope of Reformation. But may we not better apply his *Argument* to himself; and say, We, for our parts, think it impossible, that this man's *Malice* should ever be Reformed; for who should do it? God's *Holy Spirit* will not, so long as he is resolved to continue in his *Malice*; the Devil will not, who would

would have him be *more malicious* then he is, if possibly it might be effected by him: and so conclude his *Case* to be *desperate*, and that he must be fain to go on in the rage of his *Malice* still, for want of One to mend him.

But his *Fourth Reason* comes in most stately: where he makes [Fol. 42.] *Plays the Pumps of the Devil, and Vanities of this wicked World; which every Christian man hath renounced in his Baptism.* But this *Reason* comes not more *vaultingly* in, then we shall see it go *neakingly* out; as having no *Credit* for want of being known. For who ever took the *Pumps of the Devil* to be meant of *Plays*, and not rather of *Pride, Vanity, glory, Luxury, Idolatry* especially, and such like? For, if one Man go to a *Play*, and another, in the mean time, be *luxurious, arrogant, and proud*; in which of these Two shall the *Devil* be said to be in his *Pumps*? Certainly, not in him, that is at a *Play*; for he may be there, and (the rather perhaps for being there) have *Thoughts, and Meditations*

tations full of *Humility*; whilest in the other, wheresoever he be found, we are sure, there cannot be found an *humble*, or a *sober Thought*: and where *Humility*, and *Sobriety* are wanting, there is the Devil properly in his *Pomps*, and *Jollity*. This *Argument* indeed is used by *Tertullian*, and some of the *Fathers*; who, speaking of the *Plays* of the *Heathens*, call them the *Pomps* of the Devil, by reason of their *Idolatrics*, and *Superstitions*, which justly get the name of *Pomps of the Devil* from all other *Vices*; as by which the Devil is most of all *magnified*, and *exalted*. And, it seems, this Man coming to spy it in their *Books*, takes the *Argument* as he finds it; and, without ever examining the *Matter*, claps it on here, as fitly as the *Paradox* of the *Poet*, who put a *Horse's Neck* upon a *Man's Head*;

Humano capiti cervicem Pistor equinam.
For what is this to our *Plays*? Not unlike what *Cicero* spake of *Piso*; (who, out of opinion of his *Ancestors*'s *Virtues*, was by the People of *Rome* made *Edile*.)

Pisa

Piso was made *Edile*; not this *Piso*:
Quid enim simile habet, præter Nomen? For
 what likeness, but in the Name? So
 we may say; (though in a contrary
 way) Plays are the *Pomps* of the Devil:
 not our Plays: *Quid enim simile habent,*
præter Nomen? And one would think,
Tertullian had taught him plainly e-
 nough, that the *Pomps* of the Devil are
 therefore onely affirmed of Plays; be-
 cause of their *Idolatries*; where he saith:
Si igitur ex Idolatria universam Specta-
culorum paraturam constare confiterit; in-
 dubitatè præjudicatum erit, etiam ad *Spo-*
taacula pertinere *Renuntiationis* nostræ testi-
 monium in *Lavoacro* quæ *Diabolo*, &
Pompæ, & *Angelis* ejus sunt mancipata,
 scilicet per *Idolatriam*: & quid autem ex
 his non ad *Idolum* pertinuerit? id neque ad
Idolatriam, neque ad nostram *Ejurationem*
 pertinebit. Thus in English. If therefore
 it shall be made manifest, that all the Ma-
 terials, and Furniture of Plays be merely
Idolatrous: it will be an undoubted Preju-
 dice, that the renouncing we make in Ba-
 ptism belongs, and reacheth unto Plays:
 which

which are dedicated to the Devil, his Pumps, and Angels, by reason of their Idolatries: but, if there be any thing in a Play, that belongs not to an Idol; neither shall it belong to Idolatry, nor yet reach to the Renouncing we make in Baptism. What could have been spoken more plainly, to have made him understand, if his Zeal had not blinded his Understanding? or to have made him go right, if he had not been wilfully bent to go astray? If he would now at last but take this Distinction along with him, in surveying his Book once again; and apply it where there is occasion: it might do him no small ease in disburthening the Body of his Book of many peccant, and gross Humours, which make it swell into this huge Bulk.

It seems he can do no good against Plays with his Arguments from the Devil; and therefore now he means to give the Devil over: and it is Time; for we may marvel, what pleasure he could take, to keep him company so long. Yet he cannot leave the Devil so quite, but

but he must have a *Trick* from him still, and be tearing mens *cloaths* from off thir *Backs*; as the *Devil* did, *Luke* viii. 27. For his *dislike* of *Plays* now (though with interpolation of some *extravagant conceits*, which he calls *Reasons*; and will fitter take their places afterward) is because of their *Cloaths* (*Fol.* 179.) He thinks it not lawfull for *Men* to wear *Womens* *cloaths*, or for *Women* to wear *Mens*; and, because this is often done in *Plays*, and *Masques*, he utterly condemns them. Yet this is well; there is some *moderation* in this: for this *Reason* puts not *Plays* to death; but onely confines them. For, notwithstanding this *Reason*, they may be lawfull enough amongst the *Indians*, who go *naked*; and, not to go so far, they may be lawfull enough too amongst the *Irish*, where one kinde of *Garment* serves *Men*, and *Women*. But, though we can be content to *cross* the *Water* to the *Bank's-Side*; yet we should be loth to *cross* the *Irish-Seas* to see a *Play*: and can we not see one here, because of their *Cloaths*?
Indeed

Indeed, he cites a Text of Scripture for it; *Deut. xxii. 5. The Woman shall not wear that, which pertaineth to the Man; neither shall a Man put on Womens rayment.* A pregnant place indeed: but where findes he this Precept? even in the same place, where he findes also, that we must not wear cloaths of *Linsay-Woolsey*: and seeing we lawfully now wear Cloaths of *Linsay-Woolsey*; why may it not be as lawfull for Men to put on Womens Garments? But, if he will have this Precept to stand in force, though it be no part of the Moral Law, yet because it may have a Moral construction; how will he then defend his own eating of *Black-Pudding*? against the Precept for eating of Blood? For this Precept against eating of blood hath a stronger Tie, then that for wearing of Garments. For that, as given onely by *Moses*, may, with just probability, be thought to end with *Moses*: but this against eating of blood is continued after *Moses* Time by the *Apostles* themselves. And why then should it trouble Mr. *Prin*'s conscience to see a Boy wear Womens Garments;

ments, against the *Precept* of *Moses*; when it troubles not his *conscience* to eat *Black-puddings* against the *Precept* of the *Apostles*? But, howsoever it trouble his *conscience*, it need not trouble any *bodies else*; seeing his *Reason* proves it no more *unlawfull* to see a *Play*, then to eat a *Pudding*, and so, upon the matter, is not worth a *Pudding*. But, if it be so great a *sin* for *Men* to put on *Womens Garments*; what is it for *Men* to put on *Womens Conditions*? which is perhaps indeed the very *Moral* of this *Precept*: as *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and *St. Cyril*, of old, and of late, amongst others, *Macchabeus Alpinus* (a *Writer*, whom *Melancthon* exceedingly commends) expound it. And if it be so, then is this *Man* the *true breaker* of the *Precept*; and not *Players*: at least, if we may call it *Womens conditions*, to do nothing else, but *scould*, and *rail*; for what is all his *Book*, but a bundle of *scoulding Invectives*, and *railing*, instead of *reasoning*? But, to give a full *Answer* to this *Argument*, do but hear what *eminent Divines*

vines conceive of this *Precept*. And, that
 I may not do, as this man useth to do (to
 shew a *Bee*, bring in the whole *Swarm*) I
 will name you one of many, yet not
unum e multis, Martin Luther: whose
 words upon this place are these; *Hic*
non prohibetur, quin ad vitandum pericu-
lum, aut ludendum joco, vel ad fallendum
hostes, Mulier possit gerere arma Viri, &
Vir uti veste muliebri: sed ut serio, & usitato
habitu talia non fiant; ut decora utrique
sexui servetur dignitas. It is not (saith he)
 forbidden by this *Precept*; but that to
 avoid danger, or to play, and sport, or
 to deceive an Enemy, a Woman may wear
 a Man's apparel, and a Man a Woman's:
 but that it be not done in earnest, and as their
 usual *Flabit*; that so a decent comeliness
 in both Sexes may be observed. And who
 knows not, that Luther, when time was,
 did greater matters in the World, then
 making good the *Exposition* of a single
Text. But, lest you should think it a
Lutheran Opinion, or that Luther herein
 were singular by himself, I will joyn
 one with him, that had as lieve die, as be
 joyned

joyned with him, if he could otherwise choose, the learned Jesuite, Lorinuse; who, reciting great variety of Interpretations upon this Text, makes choice of this, as the soundest; that *Diffimulatio vestis potest interdum sine peccato fieri, vel ad representandam Comicè Tragicæve personam; vel ad effugiendum periculum; vel in casu simili*: For representing a Person in Comedie, or Tragedie; or for avoiding of danger, or in such like Cases, a woman may lawfully put on a man's apparel; and a man a woman's. Thus these men allow that in Plays, for which this man allows not Plays. And is it not strange, that Mr. Prin, with all his great Reading, should never meet with any of these? For [folio 199.] he professeth, he never met with any, that was of this Opinion: that either his knowledge must be very little, if not knowing it; or his Profession very naught, if, knowing it, he dissemble it.

But, that this Precept is not intended literally, as any part of the Moral Law, is not onely the Opinion of most Writers; but appeareth also by the thir-

teenth Canon of the Council at Gangra (which this man cites to the contrary :) for, upon that Canon, the old Interpreter, Balsamen delivers it, not onely as tolerable, but, in some Cases, as very commendable, for Women to go in Mens apparel; as St. Melane, and St. Eugenia, and other Holy Women, are there said to have done. There is here offered us an answer; that, though it may be tolerated, being done to honest intents: yet it cannot be tolerated, being done to lewd purposes: as Players do it. But this Answer, like Mephiboseth, is lame of both the Feet: for neither do Players use it to lewd purposes; neither, if it were a branch of the Moral Law, ought it to be done for any purpose.

But (Fol. 156) Hypocrisie is a notorious sin; and Players are in this notorious Hypocrites; and therefore the Greeks have but one word for an Hypocrite, and a Player; as if they took them both for one. A very goodly Argument! as though, because the Latines have but one word for an Host, and a Guest: (Non Hospes ab Hospite

Hospite tutus) therefore an *Host*, and a *Guest* should be all one: which if he should go about to prove, I doubt he would be found *to reckon without his Host*. Howsoever, by this reason, we may claim as much difference between an *Hypocrite*, and a *Player*; as is between an *Host*, and a *Guest*: and that's difference enough. But what is it, wherein *Players* are such *Hypocrites*? Forsooth: because men wear womens *Apparel*, and counterfeit the gestures, and behaviours of women; and so appear to be women, when they are men: and to appear other then they are, is plain *Hypocrisie*. It is plain *Hypocrisie*, no doubt; but it is not plain, that it is *unlawfull Hypocrisie*. Is it not said, that some *Zeal* is not good, if it be without *Knowledge*? and may we not as truly say; that some *Hypocrisie* is no evil, if it be without *Desert*? For the evil of *Hypocrisie* is not in the *Act*, but in the *End*: and though *Players* may be guilty of the *Act*; yet certainly of the *End* they are not. For, seeing that, which they do, is not done to *Circumvent*, but

to Represent; not to Deceive others, but to make others Conceive: though it may without question be called *Hypocrisie*, yet it is not *Hypocrisie*, that can be called in question. It is not *Hypocrisie in malam partem*. Was it *Hypocrisie* in the Three Angels, that appeared to Abraham? yet they appeared other; then they were: they seemed Men; they were Angels: they put on Bodies; they were but Spirits. And is there not as much *Hypocrisie* in putting on other's Bodies, as in putting on others Garments? Did not the Angel Raphael, when he conducted young Tobias in his Journey, both take upon him the Name, and Person, and counterfeited the speech, and behaviour of Azarias? And will he say, That this also was no *Hypocrisie*? If then Angels might be such *Hypocrites*, and yet not sin; why may not Players be such *Hypocrites*, yet come to be as Angels?

I had thought I should have gotten them leave to Play, if they would but go handsomely, and wear good cloaths: but this makes worse for them then before.

For

For (*Fol. 216.*) he dislikes Plays now, because Players wear such costly cloaths: and represent Kings, and Queens in such sumptuous Robes. He thinks, perhaps, that Kings, and Queens should wear no cloaths, but made of Leather; because it was of that stuff, that God made cloaths for Adam, and Eve; who being the greatest Princes, that ever were in the world, it were *Presumption* for any to wear better cloaths, then they did. But I think it best to let alone the *Answering* of this *Argument* untill we meet at *Amsterdam*: onely I may have leave to say this; that he should do *Players* as great wrong, to hinder them from wearing of rich cloaths, as he should do a *Goldsmith*, to restrain him from selling of rich Plate: for what do *Players*, but sell their *Cloaths*, as often as they shew them?

All, that hitherto hath been said, hath been but *accidental*, and I may say his *outside Arguments*: he never came to the *substance* till now: but now he comes, and therefore now we may look

for very *substantial* matter; and thus he begins. (*Fol. 63.*) *The subject, matter, and style of Plays is lascivious, scurrilous, and filthy: Therefore Plays are unlawfull.* But not so unlawfull as this *Argument*: for mark the *fautes* of it. If he mean it thus; *The subject, matter, and style of some Plays is scurrilous, and filthy; Therefore all Plays are unlawfull:* who sees not the *unlawfulness* of this kinde of *reasoning*, from a *particular* to conclude a *general*? But, if he mean it thus; *The subject, matter, and style of all Plays is scurrilous, and filthy: this is more unlawfull,* then the other; seeing it is directly *false*: for who knows not, that *Tragedies* are not capable of *scurrility*? Although therefore *Tragedies* cannot get his *leave*; yet, it seems, they have his *Argument's leave*, to hold up their *heads*, and *live*. But how then will the *Title* of his *Book* hold up his *Head*, to be called *Histrion-Mastix*? have a *general Name*, if it be not *general*? Will he say, that *Tragedies* be not *Histriones*; *Authors* of *Tragedies* no *Players*? He should, if he were well

well served, be made either to *abridge* his *Title*, or to *enlarge* his *Argument*. But perhaps, because *Tragedies* are the *Gentry*, I may say, of *Plays*, he is so generous as to spare them for their *Gentry's* sake; but then *Comedies*, which are but the *Commonalty* of *Plays*, are like to pay for it. But I doubt, he hath not so much *Generosity* in him, but rather, that for *Tragedies* he hath other *Tragical Arguments* in store, other *Rods in Piss* for them; and that this *Argument* is wholly imployed upon the *defeat* of *Comedies*: and therefore onely upon them it beats. But is there no means to save them from *beating*? Are there not *wards* to *keep* of his *Blow* even from these also? May we not, *first*, flatly *deny* it, and say, that in *Plays* no such *scurrility* can be found? Or, may we not, *next*, *divert* it, and say; that, if any such *scurrility* be, it is the *Poet's* fault, and not the *Players*? Or, may we not, *thirdly*, *excuse* it, and say; If any such be, it is an *abuse*, at least done in such *man- nerly* manner, that it is not *offensive* to

modest Ears? Or, may we not, *lastly*, justify it, and say; that some *scurrility* may be, and sometimes *must be* in *Plays*, yet serving always to *pious Uses*? In any of these *Sayings* he hath his *Answer*: and may take home his *Argument* with him again, to teach it *better manners*, then to *slander Plays*. But let us examine these *words*, to see if we can make them *good*, that we take not more upon us, than we are able to *perform*. For this *Argument*, though he make it but *one*, yet is, in truth, his *Flood-gate*, which lets in the *most*, or the *most substantial* of all his *Arguments*: that, if this be once well stop'd, he will not have a drop of *Water*, either of the *Spring-Water* of *Reasons*, or of the *Pond-Water* of *Authorities*, to turn his *Mill*. But in doing this there is no necessity of using *Methods*: for why should I be tied to keep order in *answering*, when he takes a *Liberty* to keep none in *objecting*? He is none of the *Methodicals* himself, and therefore cannot look, that others should be. To speak them, *prout*

in

in buccam venerit, as matters come to hand:
 Is there in Plays such Scurrility, and
Obscenity, as he pretends? Let him then
 blame the Poets, whose fault it is: for
 Players do but act that, which Poets in-
 vent? And what is he the nearer now
 for condemning of Plays? Is it not a
 proper Argument to say; *Charilus makes*
naughty Verses: Therefore there must
 no more Verses be made? Poets make
scurrilous plays; Therefore *Tolli tota*
Theatra jube, Throw down all Theatres.
 If all things must be cast away, that may
 be, and oftentimes are abused; why
 doth not this man pull out his Eyes with
Democritus? or geld himself with *Origen*?
 or wish with *Nero, Utinam nescirem Lite-*
ras! Would I had been an *Ignoramus!* But
 this Sophistry, *ab Abusu ad usum*, is so
 well known now, even *Lippis, & Tonsu-*
ribus, to the meanest sort; that one
 would wonder, how he could stumble
 upon it, but much more, how he could
 stumble at it. But we are, perhaps, more
 provident, then we need: we blame Po-
 ets, when, perhaps, there is no cause.
 For

For can he charge *Plays* directly with any such *obscenity*? He *urgeth* indeed certain *general Invektives*, and *Dolus versatus in generalibus*, *Deceit lies in generals*, but he *instanceth* in none: and we doubt not, but, if he could, he would; but, since he does not, we believe he cannot. The *Stoicks*, a *Sect* of *Philosophers*, the nearest of any to *Christianity*, were yet of this *Opinion*; that nothing is *unhonest*, or *obscene* to be spoken, which is *honest*, or *lawfull* to be done; and therefore they called all parts of the *Body*, and all *actions* of *Life* (which *Modesty* in us *suppresseth*) in their common talk, by the *proper Names*, in the *broadest Terms*; that we may truly say of *Stoicks*, *Now were more severe in the Rules of Virtuons Life*, yet *none more obscene in the usage of filthy Talk*. If then *Obscenity* of speech was no *Disparagement* in a *Stoick* to the reputation of his *Virtue*; why should it be accounted so great a *Disparagement* to the reputation of a *Player*? And yet I will allow him this: if any such *Stoical Obscenity* can be found in *Plays*;

let

let him speak as *bitterly* against them, as he can, I will never call it *Rayling*; but will take his part my self: and such, it seems, was the *Obscenity* of *Plays* in old time, as appears by *Salvianns*, *Tamavocum, ac verborum obscenitates, ut vel relationem sui interdicant*; that is, *So obscene were their Words, and Speeches, as not to be named.* And this is the *Obscenity*, which the *Antient Fathers* so much cry out against in *Plays*, as *pudicis auribus non ferenda*, not to be heard by modest ears, which I would have this man to note, that he may be brought to lay the *Saddle on the right Horse*: for in the *Plays* of our times he shall never be able to shew any such *Obscenity*. There are sometimes perhaps, when *Necessity* compells it, for representing of some *scurrilous* person, some *secret* strains, in *ambiguous* terms, like the voices of *Oracles*, as it were an *Obscenity* under *Covert*: (the *Obscenity*, to make appear the *condition* of the person; the *Covert*, to express the *modesty* of the *Player*) and this is so far from offending the *Ears*, that it is not sensible; till

till it have passed the *sence*, as not understood, till examined by the Understanding: and being once there, it comes to be but Obscenity in *Abstracto*, which was in the world before ever *Plays* were; and would be still, though *Plays* should be no more. And in this they do but imitate *Nature* her self, *quæ partes eas, quæ aspectum essent deformem habituræ, contextit, & abdidit*: who covers the parts, which would have no pleasing aspect; not took them clean away, (as this man would have it) but placed them so, that as they offend not, being seen, the *Eyes*; no more do these *speeches*, being heard, the *Ears*: and would he have more modesty in *Players*, then there is in *Nature*? To expect therefore, that *Plays* should be altogether without obscene Passages, were it not to expect, that *Nature* should make *Bodies* altogether without *Privy parts*? And the hearing of those ought no more to offend the *Ears* of any, then the seeing of these offended the *Eys* of *Adam*, and *Eve*: of which, though naked, they were not

a whit ashamed. *Obscene fights* did never trouble them, till they had made themselves *Obscene Hearts*. For as long as all is clean, that should be clean, the foulness of that, which should be foul, will never offend. Have not the neatest Cities their Sinks, and Channels? yet who takes offence to look upon them? They are necessary for our use, but not necessary for us to use. *They are therefore made foul, that we may walk clean.* Indeed, it is not so much the Player, that makes the Obscenity, as the Spectatour himself: as it is not so much the Juyce of the Herb, that makes the Honey, or Poyson, as the Bee, or Spider, that sucks the Juyce. Let this man therefore bring a modest heart to a Play, and he shall never take hurt by immodest Speeches: but, if he come as a Spider to it, what marvel, if he suck Poyson, though the Herbs be never so sovereign. How many Questions of *Aristotle's Problemes*? how many Chapters in Books of *Physick* may be found more guilty of such Obscenity, than any

is there not as great danger in seeing vices *really acted*, as in seeing them onely *feignedly represented*? in seeing them done in earnest, as in seeing them but done in jest? When vices are *really acted*, they stand as *Copies*, and *Examples*, which men are apt to follow; but when they are onely *feigned* on a *Stage*, they stand as *Rocks*, shewed onely to be shunned. When sins are actually committed, they are as *Pitch* which toucheth us, and must needs defile us; but when they are onely represented, they are but as *Pitch* seen in a *Glass*, which cannot defile us, because not touch us. Where vices are *really acted*, there men may be said to *stand in the way of Sinners*; but where they are onely *feignedly shewed*, there, men may be rather said, to sit, and hear their *Arraignment*, and *Condemnation*.

But (*Fol. 48. and 948.*) he would make us believe; *That all the attractive power in Plays, to draw Beholders, is meerly from scurrility*: as if it were no Play; at least no pleasing Play, without it. Wherein, besides his prejudice, he may be

made to confesse his ignorance: for let him try it when he will, and come himself upon the *Stage*, with all the scurrility of the Wife of *Bath*, with all the ribaldry of *Poggins*, or *Boccace*, yet I dare affirm, he shall never give that contentment to Beholders, as honest *Tarleton* did, though he said never a word. And what scurrility was ever heard to come from the mouths of the best *Actours* of our Time, *Allen*, and *Bourbidge*? yet, what Plays were ever so pleasing, as where their Parts had the greatest part? For, it is not the scurrility, and ribaldry, that gives the contentment, as he foolishly imagines, and falsely suggests; but it is the *Ingeniousness* of the Speech, when it is fitted to the Person; and the *Gracefulness* of the *Action*, when it is fitted to the Speech; and therefore, a Play read, hath not half the pleasure of a Play Acted: for though it have the pleasure of *ingenious Speeches*; yet it wants the pleasure of *Gracefull action*: and we may well acknowledg. that *Gracefulness of action*, is the greatest pleasure of a Play; seeing it is

is the greatest pleasure of (the Art of pleasure) *Rhetorick*: in which we may be bold, to say; there never had been so good Oratours, if there had not first been Players: seeing the best Oratours that ever were, account it no shame, to have learned the gracefulness of their Action, even from Players: *Demosthenes* from *Satyrus*; and *Cicero* from *Roscius*. Let him therefore keep his scurrility to himself, and send his Profelytes to sit with his Hostess at *Oxford*; whose *Apophthegm* was, *No mirth without Bawdrie*: as for us, we are contented, to see Plays in their best *Garments*, and not in their *foul cloaths*, in their *graces*, and not in their *faults*.

But who are they in Plays, that use such scurrilous, and obscene speeches? Hath not a Poet said well;

Tristia maestum
Vultum verba decent, Iratū plena minarum,
Ludentem, lasciva; severum, seria dicta.

Indeed, if they were put into the mouths of Princes, or Persons of gravity,

vity, there were just cause of dislike; but to be put into the mouths of scurrilous, and base persons, What hurt can they do? None to the Actours: for the *decorum* takes away their fault, and makes that faultless, which is *decent*, and less to the Spectatours: for how can it infect them, to imitate the scurrility, when they see it, comely for none, but scurrilous persons? It rather teacheth them to avoid and loath such speeches, seeing they cannot but loath to be such persons. For doth this man think, that goers to Plays are such simple Ideots; that when they see a beastly, or prophane part acted before them, they take it to be done for imitation? Then were the *Lacedamonians* very fools; who to make their children abhor *Drunkenness*, would make their *Slaves* drunk of purpose; and act the vice before them: that seeing in others a deformity so hatefull, they might learn, in themselves to hate the deformity.

*Sic teneros animos aliena opprobria saepe
Absterrent vitis:*

The

The man had an Itch to be writing a Book; and because he had not matter to make it *good*, he was desirous at least to make it *great*; he would have a great *Club*, though never so hollow. Greatness, he knew makes a shew, and shews carry all in the *Eye* of the world; Substance is but seldom understood, and therefore not often much stood upon. And it may be some pleasure, to observe, with what winds he blows up the bladder of his Book; and what pretty tricks he useth, to furnish his Table of Vain-glory with variety of Dishes. He hath one trick, which he useth in his Text; and seems to have learned it from *Egge-Saturday* in *Oxford*, to make diversity of meats, with diversity of dressing: As for example; Take the word *Effeminate*, this one word shall furnish him with four, or five severall Dishes of *Arguments* against Plays: as first, (*Fol. 546.*) *Plays effeminate mens minds and bodies, therefore Plays are unlawfull.* This is one of his Dishes. (*Fol. 167.*) *The very action of plays is effeminate; therefore plays are unlawfull.*

This you must take for another Dish;
(Fol. 220.) Plays are ever attended with
effeminate, and amorous Dancing; therefore
Plays are unlawfull. This is another;
 and I should cloy your stomacks too
 much, if I should serve in all his *Dishes*
 of this kinde. He hath another *Trick*,
 which he useth in his citing of *Ambours*;
 and seems to have learned it from
Gnatho in Terrence, where he counselleth,

Ubi nominabit Phædriam, tu
continuo Pamphilam; for where his *Ar-*
gument calls for *Ludos in Theatro*; he
 thereupon brings in, *Ludos in circo*; *Ludos*
in foro, *Ludos in septs*, where the matter
 requires Testimonies, against *Tragedies*,
 and *Comedies*, he presently brings in pla-
 ces of *Fathers*, and others, against spe-
 ctacles of *Fencing*, against *Bear-bait-*
ing, against *Horse-Races*, and such other
Games; as like to Plays, as Chalk is to
 Cheese; and by these, and such like
 means, he hath made a great bellied
 Book, as if there were some goodly
 childe within it; when being ript up,
 and look'd into, there is nothing to be
 found,

found, but a very *Timpany* of wind, and water. For, after all his bustling, and stir; after all the *Crambees* of his (*Fol. 565.*) *four* and *fourty* Tautological Arguments, it comes all but to this; that in *Plays* are often used Speeches, and other Circumstances, *effeminate, idle, scurrilous, obscene, prophane, and Heathenish*; and therefore (*Fol. 447.*) *corrupt mens manners, infect their affections, debauch their dispositions*; and (*Fol. 321.*) *generally indispose them to all goodness*; which is all nothing, but either his mis-taking through *ignorance*, or his enforcing through *malice*; for though such Speeches are sometimes, perhaps used; yet the *decorum* in the Speaker, the *intent* of the Speech, the *nature* of the Example, make them all warrantable; and are so far from working the *effects* he speaks of, that they rather *rectifie* the Judgment, *qualifie* the Affections, moderate the Passions, and generally dispose them to all *Virtue*: that where we meant but onely to defend *Plays*, he hath brought us now, that we are forced to praise them;

them; and where we thought but only to keep them from taking wrongfull disgrace; we cannot keep our selves now, from giving them deserved commendations. •For, what can be more worthy our embracing, then that, which both intends our good, and worketh in us, the good it intends? and what do *Players* intend, by bringing in a *Tyrant*, with words of death, and hands imbrued in blood, but to shew the deformity of *Tyranny*, to make us detest it? And do they intend this good to us; and do they not as well work it in us? Certainly, even this as forcibly, as that, apparently; for seeing there are two principall Motives to Virtue, *Praise*, and *Reward*; and two things likewise that deterre from Vice, *Shame*, and *Punishment*; what can be more forcible, either to draw us to *Goodness*, or to withdraw us from *Vitiou/sness*, then where the examples of all these are most lively shewed, and represented to us? Certainly, unless men be stark fools; rather wilfully to run into *Puddles*, and *Quagmires*, then
to

to take a fair way when it is shewed them; they cannot choose by such examples, but be drawn to walk in the paths of *Virtue*. And let him not say, as some have said; that scurrilous, and prophane speeches are very dangerous for infecting the hearers; because *Affuescendo audire, discunt facere*, By enuring themselves, they learn to practise; for this were likely to be true, if they onely heard such speeches, and ended there, which is the fashion indeed of the common actions in our life; but here, where we no sooner hear the words spoken, but presently withall, we see the shame, and punishment that attends them; certainly, it would be very strange, that by often hearing such speeches, we should get a custom of following them; and not rather, by often seeing their disgraces, get a custom of avoiding them. And to this purpose, there is in *Seneca*, a pretty tale of the Poet *Euripides*, who, in one of his *Plays*, having made a Speech of a high strain, in magnifying of *Riches*, the people grew so tumultu-

ously

ously angrie at it, (fearing least such speeches, should make men in love with riches, and prone to covetousness) that that they were ready to run upon the stage, and tear the Actour in pieces, that had spoken it; till *Euripides* was faine himself, to come out amongst them, and intreat them, to have patience, and see the end: for they should presently see, the riches he so exacted, to have such a down-fall in the miseries of his rich man *Bellerophon*; that it should leave but little list in any man, ever after to desire their company. For the speech (saith he) was but to shew the Spectatours their own Errour; but the event in Fact, was to shew them, the Truth it self.

When an *Actour* presents himself upon the Stage, untill he speak, he is but a picture, and when he speaks, he is but a Storie; (and therefore perhaps a Player is called *Histrion*, quasi *Historio*) for as one sayd well, that a Judge is *lex loquens*, a speaking law: so we may say as truly, that a Player, is a speaking Picture: or
a Histo-

a Historie in person; and seeing we know no hurt, by a Picture; and cannot but commend Historie: why should Plays be condemned, which are but a composition made of these two? A Historie is not condemned, if recording the life of *Julian*; it set down, his cruelty against *Christians*, and his Blasphemies against *Christ*. And if an Historian may lawfully write it, may not we as lawfully read it? and if we may lawfully read it; may not a Player as lawfully pronounce it? and what doth a Player else, but onely say that without book, which we may read within Book? A Player Acts the part of *Solomon*; but is never the wiser for acting his part: why should he be thought the wickedder for acting the part of *Nero*, or the more blasphemous for acting the part of *Porphyrie*? Can there be a greater Blasphemy, then to curse God? yet *Jobe's* Wife perswaded him to do so; and this is written, where it may be read: shall we therefore think it unlawfull, to read the Story of *Job*? Can there be a more blasphemous speech,

speech, then that which the *Jews* spake of *Christ*; that he had a *Devil*, and wrought his *miracles*, by *Belzebub* Prince of the Devils? yet the holy Evangelists have recorded this speech: shall we therefore think it unlawfull, to read their Gospels? Can there be a more prophane Speech, then that of the Poet; *Ede, lude, Bibe: Post mortem nulla Voluptas?* Yet *Solomon* in his *Ecclesiastes*, hath some such speeches; shall we therefore think it unlawfull, to read the Book of the Preacher? And why then (if we may *Parvis Componere magna*) shall Players be thought, either Blasphemous, or prophane: if sometimes they utter such speeches under the person of another? and indeed to speak it plainly, they cannot avoid the using, and uttering such speeches, if they will be Players. For as he, who would lively pourtray a Devil, or a deformed Monster; must needs draw some gastly lines, and use some sordid colours; so he, who will delineate to the life, the notorious lewdness of people in the world, is necessarily enforced

to such immodest phrases, as may present it in its native ugliness; else he should but conceal, or masque their horrid wickedness, that none may behold it: not rip it open, that all may abhor it: and this is the only reason, of those more uncivil, or seemingly immodest passages, that are here, and there, scattered in this Discourse. But in what Discourse think ye? even in this very Discourse of *Histrion-Mastix*. For these last eight or nine lines, are his own very words, in his Preface to the Reader; to justify the Obscenity, of his own very speeches, which he useth in his book. But is this possible? Hath he then, a Monopolie of Obscene phrases; and immodest speeches, that none may lawfully use any, but only himself? may not Players claime the priviledg of subjects, to the *English* Tongue, and use them upon occasion, as well as he? No, he useth them onely upon necessity, to express the Obscenity of Players, and do not Players use them onely upon necessity, to express the Obscenity of people? But what necessity have Players to meddle

dle with the Obscenity of people? The same necessity which he hath, to meddle with the Obscenity of Players. But he could not otherwise disswade men, from seeing such Obscene Plays; and Players cannot otherwise disswade men, from being such Obscene persons. He may thus go on, as far as he will, but when all is said; it will ever be found, either a voluntary Obscenity in himself, or a necessary in *Players*: that every Schole-boy, that hath but learned his *Cato*, will be upon his jacket with this.

*Turpe est Doctori quum Culpa redarguit
(ipsum.*

But (*Fol. 100.*) he seemes here, to please himself with a Reason; that if Plays were good Scholes of Virtue, how should it happen, that (*Fol. 102.*) Players, and the (*Fol. 143.*) Frequenters of Plays, are commonly the worst, and most vicious men? As though there were not many as honest, and wise as himself, that go to see Plays? I may justly say as honest, seeing no dishonestie is greater, then
to

to condemne men, whom he doth not know; and I may as justly say as wise, seeing no Follie, is greater, then to be so busie, where he hath nothing to do; and to be so Censorious, where he hath no Authority. But is he so foolish as he makes himself, to think that good Scholes must always produce good Scholers? Were there ever better Schole-masters in Humane Scholes, then those which the Emperour *Nero*, and *Commodus* had? Yet they both proved *Monsters* of men, the one in *Lasciviousness* and *Cruelty*: The other in *Cruelty*, and *Lasciviousness*. Were there ever better Schole-masters in Divine Scholes, then those which *Gebezi*, and *Judas* had? Yet they both proved notorious Examples to all *Posterity*; the one of *incredulous Bribery*, the other of *Bribing Incredulity*. But though we keep no Register, of such men, as have profited in virtue by this Schole of *Plays*: yet we are not altogether destitute of Examples. For hath not *Lucian* Recorded one *Lesbonax*, an honest

nest man of *Mytilene*, who being a great Frequenter of Plays, was wont to say of himself; that *he never saw a Play, but he returned home, a better man then he went out?* And what hath *Cicero* recorded of *Roscius*; who was a famous Player himself; and yet no less a famous honest man; *Ut cum dignissimus esset Scand propter Artificium; etiam dignissimus esset curia propter abstinentiam.* That his very Adversary durst not speak of him at the Barr, without this Addition, *Quem honoris causa Nomino.* And lest he should say, that the Schole of Plays is Degenerated, and grown worse, since that time; have we not seen in our own time, a famous Scholer come out of this Schole: *Edward Allen* a Player himself; Famous as well for his *Honesty*, as for his *Acting*; and who hath left behind him, a worthy Testimony of his *Christian Charity*, to all posterity? And who doubts, but amongst the Spectatours of Plays, we may finde many, like to *Lesbonax*? and amongst Players themselves, some like to *Roscius*? and even to go no further

ther then his own Authours, whom he brings in for witnesses against going to Plays; (and we doubt not but he takes them for honest men; as *Cicero*, *Seneca*, *Plinie*, and a number of such besides) yet were they all Frequenters of Plays, by their own confession in their writings: and how then, is he not ashamed to say, that none but *Infamous*, *Witchast*, *Prophane*, and *Grateless* persons are frequenters of *Plays*: when all his worthy writers, who he cites for his witnesses, were themselves frequenters of them? If their honesties were sufficient, to make them sufficient witnesses, against the lawfullness of going to Plays; why are not their Honesties as sufficient, to make their Examples sufficient *Warrants* for going to Plays? and so, I may say in their Defence, as *Cicero* said in Defence of *Roscius*; *Nisi eosdem, & Adversarios, & Testes babeant, nolo vincant*: that there never was poor Book made the Instrument of so impudent a ly, so notorious a scandal, as this *Histrion, Mastix*.

But (*Fol. 142.*) will you know, how

It happens, that *Players*, in this *Man's* account, are most excessively vicious, unchaste, prophane, and dissolute men? marry, because most of them, (as he is credibly informed) are professed *Papists*. A very necessary *Consequence*: as though to be a professed *Papist*, were to be a professed *Atheist*? for what but *Atheism* could bring forth all such excessively vicious men as he would make them? Yet this makes well for *Plays*, though it makes ill for *Players*: for *Players*, though the most excessively vicious men, yet are not so, because *Players*, but because *Papists*. Let him take heed, he pull not an old house upon his head; for though *Papists* differ from *Protestants*, in some points of *Moral*, and *Theological* Doctrine, yet they differ not from them in the necessity of *Moral*, and *Theological* Virtues. Although therefore we do not question his credible *Information*, yet we justly question his incredible *Consequence*: as being indeed a very inconsequent incredibility. If he had onely said, Some *Papists* are excessively vicious men; though
this

this had been a busie impertinent *Affertion*; yet I presume, no *Papists* themselves would much have gain-said it: for what *Religion* was ever known, that had not some Professors of it excessively vicious? But, when he saith, *Players* must needs be excessively vitious, because they are *Papists*, this lays a taint upon the generality; and makes a *Papist*, and an honest man, to be *Disparata*, and *Incompatible*; as never possible to meet together in one Person. In which opinion (what *Puritans* may do, I know not, but) I verily think, scarce one *Protestant* will be found to take his part. But we may leave *Papists* to defend their honesties, as they can themselves: and this man, as he can, to oppugn it; we meddle no further with them, on either side; but, *Ipsi viderint, Ipsi viderit*.

Sufficient hath been spoken in behalf of *Players* obscene speeches; but these are scarce one half of their obscenity: for besides these, (*Fol. 374.*) There are in *Plays* wanton gestures, amorous kisses, and complements; and these are the obscene sights,

and the great provocations to lust, for which he specially condemns Plays. Grave crimes, *Cate Caesar*: Kisses, and amorous kisses, very obscene sights, and great provocations to lust: but why more being done upon the Stage, then done in his own house? Why more done in *fiction*, then in *reality*? Why more used in *Fests*, then used in *earnest*? Why more seen *seldomly* then seen *continually*? For who sees not every stranger that comes to his house, to kiss both his own, and other mens wives before their faces? yet all done with *Vestal* modesty; and no man ever heard to complain, but onely this man: as born, it should seem, under some very lustfull, and *jealous Constellation*. And will not even Nature her self, by this Reason, be found guilty of immo-desty? for making *Pigeons* to bill openly, and *Cocks* to tread their *Hens* before mens faces? a sight, it seems, a Brother cannot see, but it presently sets his teeth a water, to be doing the like. But must we not think his *inclination* then a very dry *Tinder*, and very apt to take fire; that

that can be enflamed to lust with so cold provocations? However it be, this equity cannot justly be denied to *Players*; that, either this man may not be allowed to kiss, and use amorous Complements, when he goes a Wooing; or they may be allowed to do as much, when they represent him a wooing.

But there is yet in *Plays* a worse matter than all these; for, (*Fol. 390*) *they are the very places of meetings, where lascivious matches are oftentimes made, and sometimes acted.* But should not lascivious persons have very ill harbours, if they had not better Ports to arrive at, then to meet at a *Play-house*? And why *Plays* more than *Fairs*, and *Markets*? why *Plays*, more than confluence at *Marriages*, and other *Festivals*? why *Plays* more, then frequenting of one another's *Houses*? and what saith a *Poët*; Why *Plays* more, then even goings to *Church* it self?

(*vite,*

*Quis locus est Templis augustior? hac quoque
In culpam si qua est ingeniosa suam.*

And, it seems indeed, where *Play-
houses*

houses were so bad, that Temples were no better; as *Minutius Felix* saith: *Ubi magis à Sacerdotibus, quàm inter Avas, & Delubra, condicuntur stupra? tractantur lenocinia? Adulteria meditantur? Frequentius denique in Aedituorum Cellulis, quàm in ipsis Lupanaribus, flagrans libido desumitur.* And what marvel, if the Heathen used in Plays such *Obscenities*, who accounted such *Obscenities* to be but Plays? as little caring in such things to seem honest, as to be; but this is not the Case of *Christians*, who, though never so irregular, will yet observe this Rule; *Si non caste, tamen caute*, If not chastly, yet charily. And what caution were in this, to offer *lascivious speeches*, where all mens Ears; or *lascivious acts*, where all mens Eyes are continually upon them? as if a Thief should steal in the open street, where all men see him? (*Fol. 387.*) He tells of *Heliogabalus*, that he commanded *Stage-Players*, to commit *Adulteries*, really, and openly upon the Stage: he tells of *Tiberius*, that he caused others to defile themselves before his face. And why

why tells he these filthy tales, but onely for the pleasure he takes in telling them? for else, how far are they from the Matter, in speaking of our *Plays*? when he sees any such acts committed upon our *Stages*, let him not spare to tell us of it: till then, he may leave his gabbling of *Helioababur*, and keep his filthy Stories in store for the private delight of his own meditation.

He hath hitherto maintained himself with the *Obscenity* of *Plays*; but now, that the Patrimony of that *Argument* is spent, and gone, you shall presently see how bare, and beggarly he will grow, and for very necessity fall a pilfering. For, his very next *Argument* is directly stolen, where he makes (*Sol.* 72.) *Plays* unlawfull, because they are bloody, and tyrannical, breathing nothing but Malice, Anger, and Revenge; for this belongs properly to the Spectacles of *Gladiators*, and *Fencers*, and not to *Plays*; unless perhaps, to *Heathen Plays*, where men, and sometimes *Christian* men, were cast in amongst wilde Beasts to be de-

voured; but, what is this to our *Plays*? where never any wilde Beast was seen upon the Stage, unless perhaps such wilde Beasts as *David* speaks of, who are like to *Horse*, and *Mule*, that have no *Understanding*.

He hath another very Thrifty Reason; by which he would make us think him a good husband for us; (*Fol. 302. and 310.*) where he condemns *Plays*, because they make their *Spectatours* spend so much money, and time in seeing them. But what will *French-men* say in defence of their Recreation? Who spend more mony, and time in one day at *Tennis*; then these *Spectatours* do in many weeks at *Plays*? and how comes it, that seeing he aims onely at cheap recreations, he forgets the Emperour *Domitian's* Recreations; who made it his sport, to spend an hour in the Afternoon, in catching of *Flies*? For as for those, which he allowes of, *Fishing*, and *Fowling*; *Hunting*, and *Hawking*: the very Fable of *AEsop* would make him see his Errour, if he had the will
to

to understand the *Moral*. But how can we think him a good husband for us: who is so bad a husband for himself? for what a deal of money, and time hath he spent in Transcribing of *Authours*, and Printing his Book: which, if a man should say, had been better spent at Plays, though he perhaps would be angry: yet as wise men as himself, I verily think, would be of that opinion.

He hath another Argument, which he seems to have borrowed from the *Heathens Bacchanalia*: where (*Fol. 508.*) *he makes Plays unlawful; because they are an immediate occasion of Drunkenness, and Excess.* It was indeed usual at those Feasts, to Surfet, and be Drunk; or rather Surfeting, and Drunkenness were the *Feast* it self: but who ever saw a man Surfet, or be Drunk at a Play? and how can that be an occasion of Drunkenness, which neither ministers Example, nor Means of Drinking? No Example; unless perhaps in Fiction: and then not so much, to represent men Drunk with *Wine*, as this man with *Error*.

He

He hath an other *Argument*, which he seems to have been looking in a Glass when he made it: It reflects so directly upon himself: (*Fol. 501:*) where he, makes *Plays Unlawfull*: because they are the constant cause of much Sloth, and Idleness. For what greater Idleness, then to sit all day, transcribing of *Authours*; which is but *Actum Agere*? But should he not by this Argument have concluded rather the *Gowt* to be unlawfull? of which, when one was asked, what Idleness was the worst, he answered: *Podagrici Pedes*, the *Gout in the Feet*? Indeed to see a *Play* as he (it seems, reads Books, to look onely in their Tables) it might not be much better; but to see a *Play*, with that due observation, which the true use of *Plays* requires, he will finde it, as farr from Idleness to be at a *Play*, as to be at *Schole*: and *Scholars* would take it in great dudgeon, if he should say, they were Idle, when they are at their Books. But what saith *Attilius* in *Pliny*: *Præstat otiosum esse quàm Nihil agere*, as much as to say, *It were better*

better to be at a Play, and be idle: then to sit
Scribbling out of Ambitions, and do nothing.

He hath another Argument, with
which, it seems, he seeks to cheat us
where (Fol. 915.) he makes Plays witless-
full; because Play-houses are the Scholers,
and Plays the Lectures, to teach men, how to
cheat, and strat. For, Who knows not,
that Theevs, and Cheatours, can have their
Scholing for nothing; and need not to
pay for it, by going to Plays! Indeed,
a farr cunninger Schole-masters they
have to teach them the Craft, then
Players; one that is in Earnest; and
would take it ill at their hands, that they
should take any ill in hand, which they
had not from him. But doth not this
Reason, through the sides of Plays, give
greater wounds, to Affixes, and Sessions?
For there indeed, the plots, and pra-
ctizes of Theevry, the tricks, and con-
veyances of Cheatours, are openly laid
open, and publikly made known: that
if he call it a Scholr, certainly they are
Free-Scholes: or rather Academies in
comparison of Plays. But who knows
not

not, that both *Plays*, and *Sessions*, discover *Thefts*, and *Cheatings* indeed, but not as this man would *cheat* us; and make us think, to the end, they may be used, but as *Logick* teaches *fallacies*, to the end to avoid them. We may justly therefore for this reason, binde him over to the *Sessions*, both for the *implicite aspersi-
on* he lays upon them, and for the *explicite cheating*, he seeks to put upon us.

He hath another *Argument*, which we may call his *Rain-bow*, seeing there are as many Vices in it, as there are Colours in the *Rain-bow*; (*Fol. 551.*) where he makes *Plays* unlawful; because they occasion an apparent breach of all the ten *Commandments*, of which we may say, *Decem mundi facti sunt; sed ubi sunt illi novem?* for some sins are incompatible; that where one is familiar, the other will always be a stranger, unless he mean it as *St. James* speaks; that he which is guilty of one sin, is guilty of all: and in that sense, we may say as much of him, when he doth but onely tell a Lie. This man, with a little help, would bring it about, that

that the very sin of our first Parent *Eve* was nothing else, but her being a *Player*; where she and the *Serpent* were the *Actours*, and *Adam* the *Spectatour*; and not onely that all *Players* are damned, but that none else are damned but they. For, if *Players* break all God's Commandments, then he, who is no *Player*, breaks none of the Commandments: as when *Æsop's* fellow, being asked what he could do, answered, He could do all things; then saith *Æsop*, If he can do all things, there is nothing left for me to do. You will say, This is not to answer, but to trifle; and hath not *Solomon* advised us, *Answer not a fool in his folly, lest thou be like unto him?* yet, seeing we have answered his *Arguments* before, where he charged *Plays* with the *Vices* in particular, it may well enough serve for an answer to this *Argument*; where he chargeth them in general: and so we observe also the other Precept of *Solomon*, (fellow to the former) *Answer a fool in his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit*

You

You have heard many grave *Arguments*; you shall hear one now, to make you laugh, (*Fol. 291.*) where he makes *Plays* unlaurefull, because they provoke oftentimes profuse laughter, as though he knew not, that to be risible is onely proper to men; and no excess in this can taint them with aspersions of any beastlike quality, or make them, as all vices do, and this should, if it were a vice, to be like a Beast. And especially he is not well advised in this, in his own behalf; for if it were not for this *Risible*, we should hardly, perhaps, finde any thing in himself, to know him to be a man. But why should he blame *Plays* for provoking of Laughter, when he makes an *Argument* here himself, that provokes more laughter then ever any *Play* did? that we may truly say, *Omnes qui audiunt rident immo.* For what was ever heard more ridiculous, then to make it an *Argument* against *Plays*, (*f. 714.*) because Noah, Melchisedech, Abraham, and the Patriarchs are never read in Scripture, to have approved *Plays*? Or, as his Elegancy expresseth

expresseth it, to have been experimentally acquainted with them? As absurdly, as if one would prove, that *Guns* are no good weapons in the *Wars*, because *Joshua*, *Gideon*, *David*, and the antient *Warriors* are never read in *Scripture*, to have used *Guns*, or to have been experimentally acquainted with them; much like the foolishness, which *Livie* notes in a *Roman Tribune*, who threatned the people, he would hinder their levying of *Souldiers*, when there was no *War* toward; and, Is there not in this, as just cause to set *Marcus Crassus* a laughing, as when he saw an *Affear Thistles*?

He hath another *Reason*, as vain, and ridiculous as this; (*Fol. 127.*) where he makes it a *Reason* to condemn *Plays*, because they are at the best, but vain, and ridiculous. As though any thing of this world, even the best things that are, when they are at the best, were any other, then vain, and ridiculous; and let him not distinguish of things, and say, that some are serious; for the more serious, the more ridiculous; for what is this, but the very

Argument,

Argument, at which *Democritus* could not forbear laughing, all his life time.

But these are but the small *Fry* of his great *Pool*: he hath three *Reasons*, which, like the great *Pikes*, may be said to contain in their Bellies all his other *Gudgin-Reasons*: and in the taking of them consists, in effect, the taking away of all the other. And may we not admit them all to be true, and yet, as our case is, take no *Disparagement*, by admitting them? seeing, as he urgeth them against *Plays*: so we may urge them as well against no worse a thing then *Riches*. For his *first Reason* may be this; (*Fol. 327.*) that *Plays are a provocation unto Lust*: and is it not said of *Riches*, that they are *Irritamenta malorum*? His *second*: that *Plays* (*Fol. 521.*) *Indispose men to all Religious Duties*: and is it not said of *Riches*: that we cannot serve *God*, and *Mammon*? His *third*: that (*Fol. 565.*) they bring *Damnation*, upon mens *Souls*, and *Bodies*; and, Is it not said of a *Rich man*, that he cannot *Enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*? and why then

then should he think to fright us with his Thundring phrases, from seeing of *Plays*, and is not himself frightened with them, from seeking of Riches? Certainly, seeing all his Reasons are as strong against Riches, as against *Plays*, and yet Riches we doubt not, may be had, and held by good men; why may not *Plays* also be Acted, and be beheld by good men, notwithstanding his reasons? For, as there may be *Bonus usus Divitiarum*, which makes void all the reasons against Riches; so there may be *Bonus usus Ludorum*, which may avoid all his Reasons against *Plays*: that unless he can prove it is not lawful to be Rich, we shall never admit his proofs, that it is not lawfull to see a *Play*; let him therefore, either allow men to see a *Play*, as well as to be Rich: or, if he will perswade men not to see *Plays*; let him then write another Book, and perswade all men to be *Beggars*.

Plutarch writ a Book *De Utilitate ab inimicis capiendis*, and if this man had

the good meaning of *Plutarch*, and had written his Book, *de Utilitate à Spectaculis Capienda*; we might then perhaps have thought him, as *Charitable*, as now we think him *Malicious*. But if he be not a *Manichee*, he is, at least, very like one; who seems he could finde in his Heart, to blame God for Creating of *Vipers*, and such other *Venemous Beasts*; because his gross Head is not able to conceive, how the soveraign *Antidote* of *Treacle* should be extracted from them.

And now, to make a Recapitulation of his Arguments, to see, how he hath laboured all this while, *De lana caprina*; about a matter of nothing, and how easily his main blows may be avoided with one ward, he saith, *Plays* are bloody and *Tyrannical*. It may be true of *Heathen Plays*, it is false of ours: He saith they are a *provocation to Lust*; It may be true of *Heathen Plays*, it is false of ours: He saith they are *Ordained*, and *Dedicated* to the *Worship of Devil-Gods*; it is true of *Heathen Plays*, it is false of
of

of ours. He saith, they are the *Pomps* of the *Devil*, renounced by *Christians* in their *Baptism*: It may be true of *Heathen Plays*, it is false of ours. He saith, they are fraught with bitter *Scoffings* at Religion, and Religious men; it may be true of *Heathen Plays*, it is false of ours. He saith, they cause a prodigal Expence of *Time*, and *Mony*; it may be true of *Heathen Plays* (which lasted many times, many daies together, and were set forth at Infinite charges) it is false of ours. He saith, they are an immediate occasion of much *Actual Adultery*; it may be true of *Heathen Plays*, it is false of ours. He saith, they occasion much *Drunkenness*, and *Excess*; it may be true of *Heathen Plays*, it is false of ours. And thus, to his *Diversis Nodis*, *Unus Canes*, many arguments, as he calls them, one answer, as a wedg, may serve sufficiently, to cleave them all asunder.

Yet he hath one passage, that stands barking in a Corner, but dares not come out in the likeness of an Argument, where he calls (*Fol. 329.*) *Playhouses*,

the Seminaries of Vices; the Temples of Venery; the Scholes of Bawdery; the Dens of Lewdness; and all the Vile names he could get together, by raking *Hell*, and *Billings-gate*. But will it not be a Sot to stop *Cerberus* his mouth: if we do but examine the Common-Wealths, in which *Plays* have been most usual; whether, after *Plays* admitted, they have grown in their manners, either not worse, or perhaps better; for so it may appear, that *Plays* have been no such corruptions, no such corrupters of the times, as he would make them. Examine the *Roman* State; and, not to wander about, take the times under the Emperour *Augustus*, in which, *Plays* were in their heighth: he Reigned six and Fifty years; a reasonable time to make a tryal: and were not his times, more quiet, more civil, and more virtuous, then ever they had been before? So quiet, that all the world was quiet, and the *Temple of Janus* shut up twice in his time? So civil, and virtuous, that as himself was call *Augustus*; so his times were

were called *Augustum Saculum*. Come to our own *Country*, which is better known to us; take the *Time* from the beginning of our late famous *Queen Elizabeth*, to the present, almost fourscore years, a large time likewise for probation; and were ever any *Times* known in this *State* more *Civil*, or more *Virtuous*? so *civil*, that no *civil Arms*; so *virtuous*, that *Justice*, never more duly administred; *Sermons* never more Preached, more frequented; *Virtues* in *Princes* never more transcendent, *Loyaltie*, and *Love* in *Subjects* never more eminent; that if *Virgil* might say it of *Augustus Times*; certainly, we much more justly may say it of these of ours;

Jam redit, & virgo; redeunt Saturnia Regna,

As if the *Golden-Age*, of which the *Poets* talk such wonders, were come in- to the world again. And how then are *Plays* such Seminaries of *Vices*, as he talks of? He must find better Semi- naries then *Plays*, or he is like to have but a slender crop. That we may know

these Phrases of his, to be nothing but the *Fictions* of the Devil's Poetry, or the *Flowers* of his Rhetorick. He will say, they are the very words of *Tertullian*, and other of the *Fathers*; but will he never learn this one lesson so often taught him: *They may be true of Heathen Plays, they are false of ours.* He will lastly say, that we have spoken indeed of general, and publike *Virtues*, but they are the *Vices* of private men, that he complains of; as though the publick were any thing, but the uniting of the private; or the generall any thing, but the meeting of particulars: and who doubts, but there will be a *Cham* in the *Ark*; though *Noah* the Preacher of *Righteousness* be continually in presence? there will be a *Judas* amongst the *Apostles*, though *Christ* himself be doing his *Miracles* continually before them? But should not this man consider rather, from whence these men took their infection (which from *Plays*, we are sure they did not) then to stand baiting at *Plays*, which is at most, but *Cum capiti medendum est, Reduam*

duviam curare; for, to think to mend mens *Vices* by taking away *Plays*, is as idle, as that one should think to mend all *Faces*, by taking away *Glasses*.

He hath yet one *Argument* behinde; which is, I may say, his *Palmarium*; and which he hath kept for a final *Argument*, because it must serve to give a final blow to beat down *Plays*: namely, (Fol. 552.) *The fearfull judgments of God, which have been shewed upon them.* A final *Argument* indeed, able to beat down, not onely *Plays*, but all mens *Hearts* from seeing of *Plays*. But where is his *Commission*, to make the *Application*? It is, no doubt, good counsel, when any extraordinary fearfull accident happens, to call our selves to account, and to enter into a due consideration of all our misdoings; acknowledging, that such things are oftentimes sent of God, as gracious warnings to draw us to *Repentance*; but yet, when such things happen, to censure them presently, as Judgments of God upon any particular *Sins* and to determine upon what particular *Sin*, or

Sinner they are sent; this is more then this man hath warrant for, either from *Scripture*, or *Fathers*, or from *Discretion*, When God reveals the reason of his doing, we may safely then take notice of it, and rest our selves upon it; as when the *Earth* opened, and swallowed up *Korah*, and *Dathan*; there was manifestly known, both the *particular Sin*, and the *particular Sinners*: Likewise when *Fire* fell down from *Heaven* upon *Sodom*, and *Gomorrha*. But when the *Tower of Shilo* fell, and with the fall, slew eighteen men, who could make the application? seeing *Christ* saith, They were not the worst men, upon whom the *Tower of Shilo* fell. When a childe was born dumb, and blinde, this man would presently, it seems, have censured it, as a Judgment of *God*, upon the *Childe*, or *Parent*; yet *Christ* told his Disciples, It neither came for any *Sin* of the *Childe*, nor of the *Parents*. For the *Judgments* of *God*, are as secret, as fearfull; they are an *Abyss*, till he give them a bottom; and where *God* keeps *silence*, there men
can

can have no *science*. For, what man is he, that can know the *counsel* of God; or, who can think what his *Will* is? He tells us of *Play-houses*, both publick, and private; some suddenly fallen down, some burnt up with fire, without any apparent cause preceding? And what great wonder is this; if in so many hundred years, in so many thousand places, some few such *accidents* have sometimes happened? Have not the like happened even to *Churches*, and *Chappels*; and *private places* of *Religious meetings*? Will he therefore say, they were *Judgments* of God against the use of *Churches*, and *Chappels*? he tells us of some *Players*, and some *Spectatours* of *Plays*, that have died at the very *Play*, both suddenly, and strangely; and what great wonder is this, if in so many hundred years, in so many thousand places, amongst so many millions of people, some few such chances have sometimes fallen out? Have not the like happened to some *Preachers* in the *Pulpit*; and to some devout persons, even at their *prayers*?

Sinner they are sent; this is more then this man hath warrant for, either from *Scripture*, or *Fathers*, or from *Discretion*, When God reveals the reason of his doing, we may safely then take notice of it, and rest our selves upon it; as when the *Earth* opened, and swallowed up *Korah*, and *Dathan*; there was manifestly known, both the *particular Sin*, and the *particular Sinners*: Likewise when *Fire* fell down from *Heaven* upon *Sodom*, and *Gomorra*. But when the *Tower* of *Shilo* fell, and with the fall, slew eighteen men, who could make the application? seeing *Christ* saith, They were not the worst men, upon whom the *Tower* of *Shilo* fell. When a childe was born dumb, and blinde, this man would presently, it seems, have censured it, as a Judgment of *God*, upon the *Childe*, or *Parent*; yet *Christ* told his Disciples, It neither came for any *Sin* of the *Childe*, nor of the *Parents*. For the *Judgments* of *God*, are as secret, as fearfull; they are an *Abyss*, till he give them a bottom; and where *God* keeps *silence*, there men
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prayers? Will he therefore say, they were Judgments of God, against the use of Preaching, and Praying? How much better, is that censure in *Minutius Felix*: *Fulmina passim cadunt; sine delictu tangunt loca sacra, & prophana: homines noxios ferunt, saepe & Religiosos*: Thunder-bolts fall down indifferently; they light upon places prophane, and sacred, without any choice; they strike good men, and bad, both alike. His Inference therefore of these Judgments, shews he hath no Judgment, being as idle as busie, and proceeding rather, from a malice to the cause, then from any understanding of these effects, and as little from any *Charitie* at all to the Reader.

Thus this *final* Argument, which should have made a *final* End of Plays, hath made a *final* End of all his *Reasons*, and of all his *Reason*: and yet he hath one *Argument* more, though not one *Reason* more, but a kind of *prognostication* rather, for he tells, before hand, (*Fol. 565.*) what entertainment, both *Players*, and *Spectatours* of Plays, are like to finde in another world, even without *Repentance*

punishment, Eternal Damnation. And this he calls an *Argument, with a witness*: and it is so indeed, for it is a witness to us of his *rashness, and irreligion*. For, he defies being a *Papist*, and he denies being a *Puritan*; and now this Argument, is a witness against him, that he is no *Protestant*. For by aggravating the sin (as he accompts it) of seeing a *Play, being not Repented, with Eternal Damnation*: he shews himself to think, that every Sin not Repented, deserves not so much: for if he thought *Eternal Damnation, the common punishment, of every sin, why should he lay it, as an aggravating punishment upon this sin?* and if he think, *Some sin not Repented, not to be Mortal, we think him, for so thinking, not to be a Protestant.* If then, neither *Protestant, nor Puritan, nor Papist*: what *Religion* should he be of, that we may not justly leave the *Damnation* of this Argument, upon himself? And thus it befalls men, transported with malice, that whilest they make, their own *threatning, the measure of others suffering*

suffering; they fall them selves to suffer that, which they threatned to others.

Thus you have seen his *Fore-parts*, which are his *Reasons*; you may now be pleased to see his *Back-parts*, which are his *Testimonies*, and *Authorities*; and you shall finde him no better to follow then he was to meet; yet it makes a better shew; for he began his *Reasons* from the *Devil*, but he begins his *Authorities* from *God*: for (*Fol. 545*) he begins with the *Scriptures*, the *word of God*: no doubt, a most *powerfull evidence*, not to be spoken of without honour; not to be thought of, without *reverence*: and indeed, if he could alledg but onely the name of *Plays*, or *Players*, as spoken of in the *Scriptures*, we should have a wonderfull respect, and be wouderfull circumspect how we medled with them; but seeing he cannot do this, we may justly suspect him to be no better a man in his *Authorities*, then he was in his *Reasons*, great *pretences*, but no *proofs*, fair *colours*, but no *substance*; all he can say, is but onely to say, he hath nothing but words,

words, and words are but winde, and may well enough be blown over. For as for his *Inferences*, and *Collections*, and *Deductions*, we may demur upon them at leasure, and take time to consider. But lest any man should think we waved his *Testimonies of Scripture*, as being convincing, and such as cannot be answered; let us, for the reverence we bear them, hear him at large, and see what he hath to say out of these sacred Records. And he seems to bewray the weakness of his *Cause* at the very first: for, (*Fol. 545.*) he grants that *Scripture speaks nothing against Plays in precise terms*; and why then will he condemn them in precise terms, if the *Scripture* do not? Is not this to incur the reprehension of *Solomon*, *Noli esse nimium justus*? be not too precise; for to condemn a thing in precise terms, which the *Scriptures* do not, what is this, but to be *nimium justus*; more precise then needs? But if the *Scriptures* condemn them not in precise terms, in what terms then? Indeed onely in *Hilary Term*; for it would
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make a man merrie; or rather it would make a *Horse* break his halter to see the strange *Antick faces* of applications he makes, to wring out a condemnation of *Plays* from places of *Scripture*; and when he hath all done, we might make as good an *Argument* and say; This man speaks scarce a wise word in all his *book*; Therefore *Plays* are unlawfull: For wheresoever he findes any place against *Idolatry*, and *Altars*, against *Adultery*, or *Murther*, against wantonness, or *prophaneness*, he presently applies them as spoken against *Plays*, & never considers how idle, and simple he is, to stand picking, and culling out some certain *Texts* of *Scripture*; when if these applications, would serve, he might have said it in a word, that all the whole *Scripture* is nothing else, but a very arraignment, & condemnation of *Plays*. But thus he fetches it about; he confesseth that no *Scripture* condemns *Plays*, in precise terms; but that (*Fol. 546.*) they positively prohibit; and censure them, under the names of *Idolatry*, of things consecrated to *Idols*, of the *Cup*, and
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Table of Devils; of the Customs, Rites, and delights of Idolaters; of the way and fashion of the Heathen; of the will of the Gentiles, and such like; under which, Plays are as really, and absolutely comprised, as any part is under the whole, or any Species under its proper Genus. A very fine device, to make Quidlibet, ex Quolibet. He seems one of that mans Scholars, who deduceth, and findes comprised, all Natural, and Moral Philosophie in the first Chapter of Genesis; but will any man believe him? The Fathers said this of Heathen Plays, and he, good man, thinks he may say it of ours; will not therefore his device suit better with himself, and give us leave to say; No Scripture indeed condemns this man in precise terms; but they condemn, and censure him under the names of a false Prophet, of a perverter of Scriptures; of one, Zealous without knowledge; of a Sycophant, a Busy-body, a Slanderer, and such like; under which names, this man is as really and absolutely comprised, as any part is under the whole, or any individuum

daum under its proper *species*. And when we say this, can any man say, but that our application of these to him, is far more just, then his to *Plays*? Certainly the *Heathen*, have more colour of reason, to worship the *Sun*, out of the Text, *Et Domino Soli servies*; then this man hath to condemne *Plays*, out of any Text, against the Idolatrie of the *Heathen*. For they at least, have the ambiguity of the word *Soli*, to stand upon; but this man hath nothing *Intus* or *in Cute*, neither *Ambiguitie* nor *perspicuity* of word, neither letter nor tittle of letter, to Countenance his Exposition. There are indeed some Rules, by which, one vice may be comprised under the name of another; as when lesser vices are forbidden, it shews the greater are forbidden also: so *incest*, and *Sodomitry* under the name of *Adultery*, so *Atheism*, under the name of *Heathenism*; or when a *General* vice is prohibited, it shews, the *particular* kinds are prohibited also; so *poisoning* under the name of *Murther*; so *Bribery*, and *Fraud*, under the name of

of *Stealing*; but can he shew, that *Plays* are by any such Rules comprised under the names of the vices he alledgeth? Nothing less: if he had done, or could do this, he had spoken to some purpose, and with some reason; but since he hath not, nor cannot do this, what can we say of him, but that he hath shewed more *Malice* then *Wit*, more *Zeal* then *Knowledge*, more *Boldness*, or *Imprudence*, then either *Judgment*, or *Understanding*. He had read perhaps in some Authours some strange applications of places of *Scripture*; and he, like a true *Pythagorean*, takes all upon the Credit of *Ipse dixit*: and thereupon grows confident at last to be a Coyner of Applications himself: he thinks he hath as much *Zeal* as they; and knows, he hath less *Knowledge*; and these two joyned together, much *Zeal*, and little *Knowledge*, are the true *Parents* of all these false *Chimerical Applications*. Would any man think, that these words of *David*; *Blessed is the man, that hath not walked in the council of the ungodly: and hath not stood in the way of*

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of *Stealing*; but can he shew, that *Plays* are by any such Rules comprised under the names of the vices he alledgeth? Nothing less: if he had done, or could do.

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sinners: and hath not sate in the Chair of Scorners, were spoken by him, as against going to *Plays?* Yet *Tertullian* fetcheth it about, and takes advantages of some *Circumstances*, to make it seem probable. But may not *Tertullian* be as well mistaken in applying places of *Scripture* against *Plays*; as he was in applying them to maintain the Errour of the *Millenaries*; or the *Corporeity* of the Soul? Although for this place perhaps we may excuse him; seeing he seems to apply it, by way of Allusion, and Exaggeration onely, and not by way of *Argumentation*: in which sence, while this man mistakes it; it is one of the Seeds he takes to set in the *Wilderness* of his Brains: and from this, and such other mistaken Seeds is grown at last this huge Forest of Confusion, which he presents you with in this his Voluminous *Rhapsodie*: Voluminous indeed, if you look on the bulk; but a very *Pamphlet*, if on the substance.

But is it not strange to see, how confidently he goes to *Moses* to fetch Texts, as it were Warrants against *Plays*: as if
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he were sure, that *Plays* were then in use, in *Moses* his time? For if they were not, he would make *Moses* a very hastie Judge, to condemn them before they were born. And indeed unless where he learned, that the *Devil* invented them, he can learn also, at what time he *Invented* them; I will never believe, but he is much mistaken in the time of their *Nativity*. Especially seeing his *Rabbi Tertullian* fetcheth the greatest Antiquity of *Plays* but from the coming of *Tyrrhenus*, and the *Lydians*, into *Italie*: (for when they were called *Ludi à Lydis*) and *Tyrrhenus* came into *Italie* some distance of time, after the *Trojane War*; and the *Trojane War* was four hundred years, and more, after *Moses* Death. Now, seeing the places, which this man citeth out of *Moses*, were Exhortations to the people, to avoid the *Idolatries*, and *Customes* of the *Heathen*, that were at that time: how can they be taken as intended against *Plays*, which had no being in the world till many hundred years after?

But this may pass among, his Venial faults: he thinks, perhaps, that God will never charge him with Errours in *Chronologie*; so they exceed not a *Thousand* years: because a *Thousand* years with him are but as one day. Yet it were not enough neither to say, that *Plays* were then in use; but he must prove also, they were then in use, in such manner as now they are; for, if since that time they have mended their manners, it were no reason, that, having lived so long, they should now be put to death in their *Age* for faults committed so long since in their *Infancie*. But if they be of so great *Antiquity*, it is very probable they are of as great *Innocency*; for having had many *Accusations*, they have pass'd many *Trials*: and though often *Arraigned*, yet never *Convicted*: and they should have very hard fortune, if, having stood the blows of so many *axes*, they should now be felled with the cut of a *pen-knife*.

But, seeing he will needs be going to *Moses* for Proofs, let him go, and let us see what he can make of them; and that

that every Reader may be a Judge, I will cite you some of his places, which he takes to be *positively* spoken of Plays; and I will cite them, as he *Quotes* them, lest you should think I take advantage; the rest I will Quote onely, that you may read them at leisure; and laugh, if you can, for anger, or be angry, if you can, for laughing. (Fol. 545.) Levit. xviii. 30. *Therefore ye shall keep mine Ordinances (namely, against Incests, and Sodomitries) that ye do not any of the abominable customs, which have been done before you, and that ye defile not your selves therein.* This is the first of his places, which he alledgeth as *positively* condemning Plays. Would any man think he were in earnest? But hear another, Deut. vii. 2. *And the LORD thy God shall give the Nations before thee, then thou shalt smite them; thou shalt make no Covenant with them, nor take compassion on them.* This is another of his places, that *positively* condemns Plays. And about some ten (Deut. xii. 3. & xx. 16. Josb. vii. 12. & xi. 12. Judg. ii. 2. Numbers

bers xxxii. 52. *Psal.* xvi. 4. *Jerem.* x. 2.) more he hath of like scantling; and come no nearer to touch *Plays*, or *Players*, then these do. But these are out of the *Old Testament*: no doubt, he hath better out of the *New*; hear therefore some of them too. *Acts* xvi. 20. *But that we write unto them, that they abstain from filthiness of Idols, and Fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.* And is not this still worse, and worse? Yet hear another, *Rom.* xii. 2. *And fashion not your selves like unto the world; but be ye changed by the renewing of your mindes, that ye may prove what is the good will of God:* and about some twenty places more of like pregnancie against *Plays*. Would any man think he were well in his *Wits*, to alledge these places as spoken against *Plays*? But what should he do? he must either take these, or none; that we may justly say, The *Devil* certainly owed him a Shame, that put into his head, to take upon him the handling of this *Argument*; and it is indeed, as a most learn'd man, and most reverend *Divine* of our
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Time writes, that this man, and such as he, make the *Scripture* speak what they please; deriving strange *Positions*, and *Paradoxes* thence, when they, and their *Bibles* are alone in corners. But it is plain enough to see his crafty dealing; for he *Quotes* indeed these places, but he cites not one of them: for he well knew, if he had brought them to the *Bar* as witnesses against *Plays*, they must have stood mute; for not one of them could have spoken a word in *disparagement* of *Plays*.

But you may hear him crying out, that he alledgeth these places, but as others have alledged them before; and have we not heard *Cicero* long since crying out, that *no Opinion is so absurd, which hath on some Philosopher for a Patron?* But he hath consent, as though there were not as well *Frates in Errore*, as *Frates in Malo*. But he hath consent of Times, as though the stream of *Invectives* set once a running, upon just cause, may not continue running a long time after the Cause removed? And that which reach-

eth to them all, as though places of *Scripture* may not by way of Allusion, and Exaggeration, be applied to many purposes, to which yet, by way of direct *Argumentation*, they cannot be applied? Well, he hath now done with *Scripture*, but he had done better, if he had never begun: for is it not a shame, he should make them a stale, and bring them in for witnesses, when they have nothing to say; or rather indeed should suborn them to become false witnesses; and make them say that they never intended?

But though you take his *Bible* from him, yet he hath other very strong *Records*, that are able of themselves to carry it. (*Fol. 570.*) he hath fifty four *Councils*, whereof every one hath divers *Canons*, all to be discharged in the very faces of *Plays*, and cannot choose, but shiver them all in pieces. No doubt, the *Engines* are strong; but doth he not misstake the Mark? for, if we mark it, we shall finde them not levelled at our kinde of *Plays*, but at *Pagan Idolatrous*

trous *Plays*, (wherein, as *Balsamon* saith, there were *Maledicta*, & *Blasphemie*, besides many *Superstitions*) and addressed chiefly to restraint of them upon *Sundays*, for the time; (so the sixty fourth *Canon* of the *Council* of *Carthage*) In *Churches*, for the place; (so *Concilium Trecentense*) to *Church-men*, for the Persons; (so the five and twentieth *Canon* of the *Apostles*) But here he would take upon him to be an *Interpreter* by himself; and (*Fol. 647.*) make us believe; that, though the *Canon* speak onely of *Church-men*; yet the equity of the *Canon* reacheth to all other men. But what saith the old *Interpreter Balsamon*? By forbidding them to *Church-men*, it shews, they allowed them to *Lay-men*. By forbidding them in *Churches*, it shews, they allowed them in *Convenient places*. By forbidding them on *Sundaies*, it shews, they allowed them on *Working-daies*: and so he hath made a fair hand with himself: *Charged Canons*, to be all *Discharged*, and shot in his own face. But is this a wise, or a wise man's Argument? *Plays* were forbidden

bidden by *Councils* heretofore; therefore they ought to be forbidden by the *Church* now? For how many things have been decreed by *Councils*, which now are clean left off, and abrogated? Did not the *Council* of *Antifodore* decree it unlawfull to give *New-years Gifts* at *Christmas*? Yet who sees it not now an *Annual custome*; and without offence? Did not the same *Council* decree it unlawfull to deck houses with *Lawrel*, or *green Boughs*? Yet who sees it not now an usual fashion, and counted a *Decency*? Did not the *Synod* in *Trullo* decree it unlawfull for *Gossips* at a *Christening* to marry together ever after? Yet what *Marriages* now more lawfull, more frequent? Did not the same *Council* in *Trullo* decree all eating of *Blood* to be unlawfull, and subject to *Excommunication*? Yet who eats it not now familiarly, and without scandal? Infinite the like. For indeed the *Constitutions* of the *Church* have ever had regard to the time: and the time to the circumstances of occasion; which not being known

known, no man can Judge of the great fitness of Decrees, as they might be then; and yet of the great unfitness of the same Decrees, if they should be now. And therefore, though this man seem to produce *Councils*, yet, in truth, he produceth them not, he delivers the words as a *Parrat*, that pronounceth the Syllables, but not as a man, that understands the meaning; and not to deliver them in their full sense, is in true sense, not to deliver them at all; as *Cicero* saith, *Then shall a man be said to say the same thing, when he saith it in the same sense, and with the same intent.* But how can this man do this, when he knows not the intent, nor the circumstances of it? or, if he do, yet he dissembles it, and will not know it, which is a worse ignorance, then the other. And if we should allow him the levelling of his Canons, as he pretends, though we are not willing to lay any taint upon such reverend *Assemblies*, yet this we may be bold to say, that oftentimes *Major pars meliorem vicit*; and that sometimes one *Papantius* hath

hath been more worth, then all the *Council* besides.

And (*Fol. 668.*) as for his *Squadrons* of seventy one *Fathers*, and his one hundred and fifty other *Writers*, whom he brags to have gotten on his side, though it make a great shew, yet it is no great matter, if we consider he hath been fifteen hundred years in getting them; and especially, if we consider, that all those, whom he cannot get on his side, we may justly challenge to be on our side, and will make a greater troop, then his can make an army. But, lest it should be thought that all these *Trumpets*, which he pretends to be for him, be so for him, that they be against us, let us a little hearken to their sounding, whether it hath been always upon a true *Alarm*, or no; for if it have not, we may justly except against them, and bar their voices from our *Scrutiny*.

Some therefore of his *Trumpets*, and those of the best, and ancientest, are such as sound onely at *Pagan Plays*, whereas our *Plays* are no more like them,

them, then *Helene* the Mother of *Constantine* was like *Helene* the Wife of *Menelaus*; and are as different from them, as we our selves are differing from *Pagans*: and of this, both *Tertullian*, and *St. Cyprian*, (the two most earnest of all the *Fathers* against *Plays*) may be witnesses; and indeed witnesses *instar omnium*: and whereupon do they ground their condemnation of *Plays*? Do they not both onely upon *Idolatry*? Hear *Tertullian* first, *If there be no Idol in the Play, that Idolatrie be not committed in it, then I charge it not with any renouncing, which we have made in Baptism.* Next hear *St. Cyprian*, *Quod spectaculum sine Idolo? Quis ludus sine sacrificio?* If therefore this man can finde in our *Plays*, either *Idols*, or *Sacrifice*, he may justly require our voices in crying down of *Plays*; but, if they be as clean from leprogies, as *Naaman* was from his, having washed in *Jordan*, then hath this man need to be down on his knees, and to ask these *Fathers*, and us forgiveness, them for miss-reporting, and miss-enforcing

forcing them; us, for mis-enforming, and mis-perswading su. Because *Miriam* was excluded from the Camp, when she was leprous; shall we therefore not admit her into the Camp, when she is cleansed? Indeed, when this man before brought poor, and simple reasons to prove his Cause, we could not much blame him, (for you can have no more of a man then his *Talent*) but now, that he wrests *Scriptures*, traduceth *Councils*, falsifieth *Fathers*, mis-interprets *all*; this most needs have some thing voluntary in it, and hath therefore no *Mean* in the evil, because a *meaning* to be evil. The onely excuse is to say; that he seems onely *sapere ex Indice*, to have all his learning from the *Tables* of Books: for they be these indeed, that make so many *Mountebanks* of *Scholars*, as swarm in the world. For, when a *Theme* is propounded, they run presenty to the *Tables*, and pick *Authours* pockets of what serves their turns, but never once offer to look the *Authours* in the face, and so, not knowing the *Antecedents*, and
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Subsequents, they neither understand what they read, nor this man, what he writes.

And that you may know him to be such an one, you shall find it by this one cast of his Scholar-ship, (*Fol. 546.*) where he saith, *That Cyprian was seconded by Tertullian, in his Opinion against Plays*: as though *Tertullian* had lived after *Cyprian*: for that a man, who goes before, and begins an *Opinion*, may be seconded by him that follows, there is reason; but to say, that a man, which follows, and continues an *Opinion*, is seconded by him that went before, and began it, was never heard of, till he hath brought it into *Being*. And may we not here say, that this one *Answer* alone, is it self a full discharge to his whole *Book*, without any more ado; seeing all the *Arguments* he brings in his *Book*, either drawn from *Reason*, or from *Authorities*, either of *Counsels*, or *Fathers*, or other *Writers*; they are true enough against the *Plays* of the *Heathen*; but, as *Plays* are now in use amongst *Christians*, not true

true word in any of them; and therefore where he hath entituled his *Book*, A *Tragedie* of *Actions*; he should, if he had done right, have entituled it, A *Comedie* of *Errors*. It is true indeed, *Tertullian* condemneth *Plays* by places of *Scripture*, not onely against *Idolatry*, and *Superstition*, but against *Sensuality* also, and *Concupiscence*; but doth he not by the same places condemn also *second Marriages*; when either a man marrieth a second wife, or a woman a second husband? yet he is condemned for applying the places against these; and why not then as well, for applying them against *Plays*? for who doubts, but there is more *Concupiscence*, and *Sensuality* in marrying a second wife, or husband, then in seeing a *Play*?

There is yet another Sense, in which these holy *Fathers* do sometimes speak of *Plays*, though neither *Idolatrous*, nor *Superstitious*, as things unworthy of a *Christian* man: but is it not in the sense, that *Christ* spake of the providence for earthly things, of caring for food, and rayment,

payment; *after all which*, saith he, *the Gentiles seek?* And doth not Saint Paul in the same sense, though in another degree, vilifie also the best works, that we can do, even the good works of the Law; accounting them to be no better then very *Dung*: then which he could not have used a more contemptible, and disgracefull Term. But who knows not, that these things are spoken by way of comparison? If therefore that, which is *comparatively* spoken, a man shall take as spoken *positively*, shall he not shew himself a *superlative* false *Expositour*? For, setting aside *Idolatry*, and *open Obscenity*, which our *Plays* detest as much as this man, neither *Tertullian*, nor any of the *Fathers*, did ever any otherwise condemn *Plays*, but as they condemned all *artificial* delights of the world, aspiring onely to that perfection, of which *St. John* speaks; *Love not the world, neither the things of the world: if any man love the world, the love of God is not in him.* I speak this the rather for *prevention*; lest the man, vouchsafing

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perhaps to read this *Discourse*, should think he had found here a just ground for a *Reply*, and vex us again with *transcribing of Authours*, and heaping up *Mountains of Authorities*, like *Pelion upon Ossa*, to this purpose: which now, he may hereby know, will serve him to no purpose; for we seek to justify *Plays*, as fit recreations for an honest *Natural*, or *Moral* man, but no ways to be matched with the high *mysterious Contemplations* of a *Christian* in *Divinity*. And, I doubt not, but all the *Sentences* of the *Fathers*, spoken against *Plays* in this kinde, will take this for an *Answer*; and this may be sufficient to shew, that these mens sounding is insufficient, & *nihil ad Rhombum*.

Others there are, of whom we may be bold to say, seeing the *Proverb* saith it, that *The greatest Clerks are not always the wisest men*. Bring them to a *Matter*, that is not meerly *Logical*, and you shall finde them oftentimes to be meerly *Irrational*. *Plays* therefore being *Practical*, and their chief use consisting in *Action*; these

these mens soundings will prove no other, then as the barking of *Dogs* at *Moonshine* in the *Water*.

Others there are, that sound out of *zeal*, but their *zeal* being without *knowledge*, though we may commend their *zeal*, yet we cannot commend their *ignorance*; and we may truly apply another *Proverb* to these, that *With too much haste they outrun the Constable*: for though they had the *Alarm* in their ears, yet they have lost it by the way; and have so fast fixed their eyes upon the abuse of *Plays*, that they never cast a look upon the right use, but are like one *Gebryas*, whom *Plutarch* speaks of, who fallen down, and struggling with *Magus*, bid *Darius* thrust his sword through them both. But these are no fit men to make *Judges* of, who ought rather to spare the *guilty*, then to condemn the *innocent*; and rather to venture a doubtfull *danger*, then to destroy a manifest *benefit*: for the hurt of *Plays*, though seen, may be avoided; the benefit of *Plays*, if not seen, cannot be obtained. And thus, by

that time these mens soundings are all suppress'd, there will be as few left to sound their *Trumpets* against *Plays*, as were left to cast *stones* at the *Adulterers* in the *Gospel*.

And lastly, when the *Fathers*, and other devout *Writers*, inveigh so bitterly against *Plays*, and apply to them such heavie styles, may they not be understood to do it *transumptis*, by way of *Exaggeration*, in *majorem cautelam*: that there be not so much as the appearance of evil amongst *Christians*, as *St. Paul* acknowledgeth? And when *Players* use *Speeches* sometimes, and *Actions*, a little swerving from the strict Rules of *Puritie*, may they not be understood to do it *hymnōis*, by way of *Illustration*, in *majorem suadelam*; as a *Player* in *Terence* professeth his intent to be, *Ut, cum cognoverint, perpetuo oderint*? Although therefore there may seem to be between them a *Diametrical opposition*; yet, seeing they agree in the *Principal* intent, that is, in *Moral* erudition, why may they not be brought to some indifferent reconciliation,

ment, and not continue in the deadly *fewd*, which this man *professeth*: if a Spirit of *Charity*, which covereth faults, and not a Spirit of *Malice*, which maketh faults where none is, were the *Umpire* between them, and had the hearing, and handling of the matter?

After his *Canons* of *fifty four Councils*, and his *seventy one* pieces of *Ordinance* of the *Fathers*, and his *hundred and fifty Musket-shot* of other *Writers*, he comes at last (*Fol. 702.*) with his *Squibs* of *fourty Heathen Writers*, and *Philosophers*; but hath he not utterly disgraced his whole *Army*, by having such *Scare-crows* to march in the *Rear*? Hath he not extremely overshot himself, to bring his Cause before *Heathenish Moral Writers*? Whilest he kept himself in *Foro Divino*, and *Foro Ecclesiastico*, though he had not much to say against *Plays*, yet *Plays* had not much to say for themselves; (for we must not look, that the *Scriptures* will perswade us to go to *Plays*, no more then they perswade us to seek to be rich) if he had kept himself within his

compass, and gone no further then his Name professeth, to be onely *Histrionastix*, which is, in his own interpretation, a *Beadle of Beggars*, he might with some indifferency have been tolerated; but, having once gotten the *Whip* into his hand, he lays about him like a *Bedlam-man*, and strikes at every man he meets, not onely his professed *Duellists*, the *Players*, that act the *Plays*, but the *Poets*, that make them, the *Spectatours*, that see them, the *Magistrates*, that allow them, the *Musick*, that abets them, the *Dancing*, that graces them; nay, he spares not Sovereign *Majesty*, even *Kings*, and *Princes*: that we must needs now take his *Whip* from him, and if he shew not himself more reasonable with his *Tongue*, then he hath done with his *Pen*, even send him to *Bedlam* for a mad man. But for *Musick*, and *Dancing*, we will talk with him hereafter: now we will onely question him about the other, and begin with *Poets*, because they are the *Beginners* of *Plays*. And what can he say, why he should offer to whip them?

them? Were they not highly esteemed, when they lived? Are they not highly valued, now they are dead? Is there any Library, where their *Books* are wanting? Is there any Learned man, that cites not their Sentences? Nay; so much did *Plato* esteem of *Sophron's* Books, who was, as *Quintilian* saith, but *Mimorum scriptor*, as it were a writer of *Ballads*, that he was found to have them under his Pillow when he died. If then he cannot for very shame condemn *Poets*, how can he with any face condemn *Players*? As if he should allow a *Song* to be set in *Musick*, and not allow it to be sung? or an *Oration* to be penned, and not to be pronounced? But which are the *Players* he would whip? If onely the bad *Actours*, we are contented; let him not spare them: for to be a bad *Actour* is no more the part of a *Player*, then his *Book* is the *Work* of a *Scholar*. But will he therefore whip *Roscius* too? He were best take heed what he does: for, if *Roscius* bring him once upon the *Stage*, he will make him more ridiculous by

playing the *Beadle*, then once he made *Charea*, (whom *Cicero* speaks of) by playing the *Bawd*. *Brutus*, that glorious *Tyrannicide*, was not only a great favourer, and furtherer of *Plays*, but he writ to *Cicero*, that he should not intermit to see them, even presently after *Cæsar's* death; and will he whip *Cicero* too, if he take him at a *Play*? He were best take heed what he doeth; for *Cicero* can write *Orationes Prinnianas*, as well as *Philippics*, that will live to his disgrace, as long as Letters shall live in grace. *Pompey* the Great built a *Theatre* on purpose for seeing of *Plays*; and will he whip *Brutus*, and *Pompey* too, for dissolute *Magistrates* in allowing of *Plays*? He were best take heed what he doeth; for *Brutus* hath a *penknife* died in blood, and *Pompey* can lead him as a *Slave* in his *Triumphs*: and it is not for a simple *Gown-man* to meddle with them, who were the *Princes* of the *Gens Togata*. *Augustus Cæsar* thought so modestly of *Plays*, that he allowed *Vestal Virgins* to go unto them, assigning them a place
in

in the *Theatre*, where they should sit, and see them; and will he whip *Vestal Virgins* too, if he catch them at a *Play*? He were best take heed what he doeth; for they sit there by the *Emperour's* allowance; and *Non est tutum in eum scribere, qui potest proscribere*, It is not safe writing against him, who hath power to banish you. If *Plays* then have *Roscus* for an *Actour*, *Cicero* for a *Spectatour*, *Brutus* for an *Abettour*, *Pompey* for a *Benefactour*, and *Augustus* for a *Patron*, where is he, that scandals *Plays*, as if they durst not shew their faces in any good *Company*? Let him bring me five such men in *Foro Mæiali*, in disgrace of *Plays*, as I have brought him five here in their commendation, and I will confess the *Game* lost; if he cannot, let him then leave his facing, and his bragging, which do but set him aloft, to make him a *Spectacle*; and though with the *Credulous* they get him *Credit*, yet with the *Judicious* they shew he hath no *Judgment*.

But where are (*Fol. 702.*) his fourty *Heathenish Moral Writers*, and *Philosophers*,

phers all this while? *Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Tacitus, Pliny, Macrobius, Marcus Aurelius*, and the rest? Indeed he hath made them his *Executors*, but they refuse to *administer*; and we may say of them, as *Augustus* said of his *Ajax*, (a *Tragedie* he had written) *In spangiam incubuit*, they are shrunk in the wetting. And he makes me think of a Mad man of *Athens*, who, in all other points a sensible man, onely in this one point *distracted*, that, standing by the *Sea-side*, what *Ships* soever he saw pass by, he presently thought them to be his own, and would exceedingly rejoyce, as if they were his *Ships*, newly come home with *rich prizes*: so this man, in other matters, for any thing I know, well enough in his wits, seems yet to have one corner of his Brains possessed with this madness; that standing in his *Library* amongst his *Books*, what good *Authors* soever he sees there, he presently thinks them to be of his *Opinion*, against *Plays*, when, Good man! there is no more to be found of his *Opinion* in any of their
Books,

Books, then was found of this mad *Armenian's*, goods in any of the *Ships*. It were tedious to examine them all; if I shew you his *faults* in some; you may believe me in the rest: but what need I require you to believe me, when you may turn to the places, and take him tripping your selves. For in the places he cites either ye shall finde nothing at all of that he speaks, or nothing at all to the purpose he speaks of. Try him in *Seneca*, because he is likeliest to be next at hand. He cites his one hundred and twenty second, and one hundred and twenty third *Epistles*: but in these two long *Epistles* there is not a word to be found concerning *Plays*. He cites his seventh *Epistle*, and there indeed he speaks of *spectacula*; but what? not *Plays*, but *Earnest*; of which he saith, *Manè, Leoniibus, & Ursis homines; meridiè, spectato-ribus suis obijciuntur*. He cites his *Proem* to his *Controversies*: there he hath a Line, or two, of the *Effeminateness* of young men in his *Time*; but concerning *Plays* *Nè verbum quidem*. He cites his twelfth

Chapter,

phers all this while? *Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Tacitus, Pliny, Macrobius, Marcus Aurelius*, and the rest? Indeed he hath made them his *Executors*, but they refuse to *administer*; and we may say of them, as *Augustus* said of his *Ajax*, (a *Tragedie* he had written) *In spongiam incubuit*, they are shrunk in the wetting. And he makes me think of a Mad man of *Athens*, who, in all other points a sensible man, onely in this one point *distracted*, that, standing by the *Sea-side*, what *Ships* soever he saw pass by, he presently thought them to be his own, and would exceedingly rejoyce, as if they were his *Ships*, newly come home with *rich prizes*: so this man, in other matters, for any thing I know, well enough in his wits, seems yet to have one corner of his Brains possessed with this madness; that standing in his *Library* amongst his *Books*, what good *Authors* soever he sees there, he presently thinks them to be of his *Opinion*, against *Plays*, when, Good man! there is no more to be found of his *Opinion* in any of their
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Chapter,

Chapter De brevitare Vita, a place rather against himself; for *Seneca*, having there spoken of the *Luxury* of his *Time*, concludeth thus; *Inunc, & Mimos multa mentiri ad exprobandam luxuriam puta: plura mehercule praterunt, quàm fingunt.* He cites the one and thirtieth, and two and thirtieth *Chapters* of the seventh *Book* of his *Natural Questions*, wherein is not a word, that makes against *Plays*, onely he complains, that *Plays* were then in more request, then the study of *Philosophy*. He cites the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth *Chapters De vita beata*, but in all them, of *Plays*, *Altum silentium*. And is not this man now the very *mad man* of *Athens*? I might say here, *Et crimine ab uno disce omnes.* But try another; take *Macrobius*. He cites his first, and seventh *Chapters* of his *Saturnalia*: but in the first not a word of *Plays*; in the other he shews how wonderfully *Augustus Caesar* graced certain *Players* of his *Time*, *Laberius*, and *Publius*, *Pylades*, and *Hylas*, as if he should *Quote* us a place on purpose, to give himself the

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Lie. He cites *Valerius Maximus*, who tells indeed of *Sempronius Sophus*, that he put away his Wife for going to *Plays* without his privitie: but this was not for going to *Plays*, but for going without his privitie, and is thus far rather for the reputation of *Plays*, that it was not uncommendable for women to go to *Plays*, so they went with their husbands, or in other good company, with their privitie. And is not this man still the mad man of *Athens*? He cites the two and twentieth *Epistle* of the fourth *Book* of *Plinie*, but there a Judgment only is passed against an *Agon Gymnicus*, an Exercise of naked *Wrestlers*, and what is this to *Plays*? He cites *Socrates*, and thinks he hath wisdom on his side, because he was judged the wisest man by the *Delphian Oracle*: but was *Socrates* a fit man to condemn *Plays* for Obscenity: who (as *Salvianns* relates) would have no Man to have any Wife of his own, but all Women to be in common: and what were this, but to betray the City, whilst he defends the Suburbs?
For

For, where this *Opinion* is held lawfull, what *obscenity* can be held unlawfull? He must therefore either renounce *Salvianus* his *Testimony*; and so he shall lose the blessing of one of his *Fathers*, or else renounce *Socrates* his *Judgment*, and so he shall lose the *Ring-leader* of one of his *Squadrons*. He cites *Plato*, but he is taken from him by one, that will hold him in spight of his great words, the thrice-Worthy *Sidney*, who proves plainly, that *Plato* banish'd not *Players* out of his *Common-wealth* for any of the reasons by this man alledged; but because the *Poets* of his *Time* filled the world with a wrong *Opinion* of the *Gods*, and he would not have the Youth depraved with such *Opinions*, whereof now, without further Law, *Christianity* hath taken away all the hurtfull belief. And so he can have no help from any of these, but he must be the mad man of *Athens* still. And as for *Cicero*, and the learned *Emperour*, *Marcus Aurelius*, you shall hear them presently speak so much to his face; that, if none else would prove him

to be the *mad man* of *Athens*, yet they themselves will be the men shall do it.

But these are but single, and private men, (*Fel. 713.*) He can shew whole *Cities*, and *Nations*, that banished *Players*. And did they not *Physicians* also, and *Philosophers*, and *Mathematicians*? Yet in many *Cities* they were kindly entertained; they were *Civitatis donati*, enfranchised, and made *Free Citizens*: and some of them grew to that wealth, that is incredible; as it is recorded of one *Æsop*, an *Actour* of *Tragedies*, that he left his Son so rich, that he fed upon *Pearl*, and was served at his Table in *Silver Dishes*. But mark how this man can play the *ambidexter*. At first, it was a good *Argument* against *Plays*, because they were the Customs, and delights of *Heathen* People: now it must serve for an *Argument* against them, because they were rejected, and banished by *Heathen* People, that we need not wonder, how his *Book* comes to be so vast, and voluminous, seeing with the same breath he can both kindle, and blow out the fire; the same

same thing, both affirmed, and denied, he can equally make to serve his turn.

And where he tells us of great Princes, and mighty Emperours, both *Heathen*, and *Christian*, that are on his side; what should we speak of any *Heathen* Emperours after him, who had none before him, the great *Augustus*, as worthy to shut up the leaves of this contentious Discourse, as he was to shut up the doors of the *Temple of Peace*. And him we have already shewed, by places of the man's own directing, to be directly against him: but, to leave no place of doubt, how firmly *Augustus* is on our side, hear what *Suetonius Tranquillus* saith of him, *Spectaculorum & assiduitate, & varietate, & magnificentiâ omnes antecessit; In the daily frequenting, and in the variety, and magnificence of setting forth Plays, he exceeded all men.* Indeed the man (*Fol. 459.*) labours much to get *Augustus* from us, and we cannot blame him: yet in this we blame him, that he seeks to get him from us by a trick; he would make us believe, that *Augustus* did

did not favour *Plays*, or *Players*, because he punished two excellent *Players*, *Hylas*, and *Pilades*, the one with *Whipping*, the other with *Banishment*. As though any man thought *Augustus* so far to favour *Plays*, as to grant *Players* an Immunity of committing faults without controulment? For he punished them not meerly for *Playing*, but for playing the *Knaves*, and for their *Misdemeanours*. And now, that I may *Coronidem imponere*, conclude all with one, that wore a *Christian Crown*, and wore it so worthily, that he was called *Pater Patriæ*: did not *Lewis the Twelfth*, King of *France*, command *Plays* to be used, and to be used after the old maner, with liberty to tax mens Vices, and not to spare even scoffing at himself, if he deserved it? And how can we forget a *Queen* of our own, (of late famous Memory) whose *Virtues* we shall remember longer, then our own *Names*: who would never have given allowance to *Plays*, all the time of her *Reign*, and been her self oftentimes a *Spectatrix* of them; if she

I had

had either been informed by her Confessours, or had conceived in her own excellent Judgment, that they could be any either Scandal to *Religion*, or Disparagement to *Modestie*. And it may be a President of no small moment for the countenancing of *Plays*, that a great *Prelate* of our time, Eminent as well for his Piety, as his Learning, yet seldome passed a *Christmass*, that he had not *Plays* Acted at his house before him.

But what cares this man for either *Princes*, or *Prelates*? for what (*Fol. 734.*) saith he: *Too many great ones (he knows not out of what respects) have vouchsafed to honour Plays, (or rather dishonour themselves) with their presence: and (Fol. 735.) were degenerating Princes: this is, that he stands (Fol. 719.) upon, and will maintain, that not one, either Heathen, or Christian writer of any Note, can be alledged in defence of Plays.* A bold challenge, but, if there be no fallacie in his *Writers of Note*, a challenge, that is presently like to fall to the ground.

For

For what thinks he of *Marcus Tullius Cicero*? was not he a *Writer of Note*? Who, though he have not written a Book on purpose, yet hath inserted in his Books many notable Sentences in behalf of *Plays*; which if we should collect, would make a just Volum. But what need we, when he hath one sentence, that seems as a Verdict on their side, where he saith, *Comædia est Imitatio vitæ, Speculum consuetudinis, & Imago Veritatis*: (a short, but a full Description of the Nature of *Plays*;) a *Comedy is the resemblance of Life, the mirrour of Custome, the image of Truth*: in which not a word, that speaks not, if not in their Praise, at least in their Commendation. And not to stand piling up of Authours; what thinks he of one, that may be *Instar multorum*, the *Emperour*, and *Philosopher*, *Marcus Aurelius*? Was not he a *Writer of Note*? Who in his excellent Book of *Morality* (for which we are beholding to our engrafted Country-man, a learned Issue of a most Learned Parent) hath so briefly, and

yet so fully, expressed the profit of *Plays*, that you must not think it tedious, if I set down his own words. *Tragedies* (saith he) were at first brought in, and Instituted, to put men in minde of worldly Chances, and Casualties, that these things in the ordinary course of Nature did so happen, that men, that were much pleased, and delighted by such accidents upon this Stage, would not by the same things, in a greater Stage, be grieved, and afflicted. After the *Tragedie*, the *Comœdia Vetus*, or antient *Comedie* was brought in; which had the liberty to inveigh against Personal Vices; being therefore, through this their Freedom, and liberty of speech, of very good use, and effect, to restrain men from pride, and arrogancie. After these, what were either the *Media*, or *Nova Comœdia* admitted for, but meerly, or for the most part, for the delight, and pleasure of curious, and excellent Imitation? Thus writes *Marcus Aurelius*: and what could he have spoken in so few words to a greater praise of *Plays*? And this he writes in his Book, I may say, of *Mortified Moralitie*; that one may be
sure,

sure, he speaks as he thinks: and cannot be suspected to flatter Sensuality. And what will the man say now to *Heathen* Writers? What? but that, which we may say for him; that sure their Books had no *Tables*, and so he could not come to see what they said of *Plays*. Or perhaps for all his saying, he cares not much whether *Heathen* Writers be of his side, or no: but for *Christian* Writers, he is sure enough of them, to make his challenge good. But is not this Impudence past all patience, when (*Fol. 763.*) he hath named himself two *Writers* of *Note*, *Molanus*, and *Lindanus*; the one a *Divinity Professour*, the other a reverend *Bishep*, who have both of them written in Justification of *Plays*? But you must allow him to except these, he meant so when he made his challenge. Well, be it so: what thinks he then of the *Glory* of our *Nation*, the Incomparable Sir *Philip Sidney*? Was not he a *Christian*, and a *Writer* of *Note*? Who in his general *Defence of Poetry* hath inserted also a particular defence of *Plays*,

and you may well hear his words without altering, because they are not capable of bettering. *Comedie* (saith he) is an Imitation of the common Errours of our life, which the Comedian representeth in the most ridiculous, and scornfull sort, that may be, so as it is impossible, that any Beholder can be content to be such an one. Now, as, in *Geometrie*, the *Oblique* must be known as well as the *Right*; and, in *Arithmetick*, the *Odd* as well as the *Even*: so, in the Actions of our Life, who seeth not the filthyness of Evil wanteth a great foil to perceive the beauty of *Virtue*. This doth the *Comedie* handle so, in our private, and domestical matters, that with bearing it we get as it were an Experience: what is to be looked for of a niggardly *Demea*, of a crafty *Davus*, of a flattering *Gnatho*, of a Vain-glorious *Thrafo*, and not onely to know what effects are to be expected, but to know, who be such, by the signifying badge given them by the Comedian. And little reason bath any man to say, that men learn the Evil, by seeing it so set out; since (as I said before) there is no man living, but by
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the force' truth hath in Nature no sooner
 seeth these men play their parts, but he wish-
 eth them in Pistrinum. Although per-
 chance, the sack of his own faults lie so be-
 hinde his back, that he seeth not himself to
 dance the same measure: whereto nothing
 can more open his Eyes, then to see his own
 Actions contemptibly set forth. So that,
 the right use of Comedie will, I think, by
 no body be blamed: and much less of the
 high, and excellent Tragedie, that open-
 eth the greatest Wounds, and sheweth forth
 the Ulcers, that are covered with Tissue;
 that maketh Kings fear to be Tyrants, and
 Tyrants to manifest their Tyrannical hu-
 mours; that, with stirring the Effects of Ad-
 miration, and Commiseration, teacheth the
 uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak
 Foundations Gilden roofs are builded.
 It were therefore too absurd to cast out so ex-
 cellent a representation of whatsoever is
 worthy to be learned. Thus the excellent
 Sidney: and what more could he have
 said, if he would have sought to flatter
 Plays? Yet there is an Exception a-
 gainst him to, because (Fol. 913.) he
 hath

hath written an *Arcadia*, one of the Books in this man's *Index Expurgatorius*. But perhaps he will admit of no *English* Testimonies: take one then in *France*, and what thinks he of the Ingenious, and Learned *Michael de Montaigne*; was not he a *Christian*, and a *Writer of Note*? And hear what he writes in the five and twentieth Chapter of his First book of *Essaies*: *I have ever (saith he) accused them of Impertinencie, that condemn, and disallow such kinde of Recreation, and blamed those of In-justice, that refuse good, and honest Comedians, or (as we call them) Players, to enter our good Towns, and grudge the common people such publique sports. Politick, and well-ordered Common Wealths endeavour rather carefully to unite, and assemble their Citizens together, as in serious Offices of Devotion; so in honest Exercises of Recreation. Common society, and loving Friend-ship is thereby cherished, and encreased: and besides, they cannot have more Formal, and Regular Pastimes allowed them, then such, as are Acted, and Represented in open view of all, and in the presence of the Magistrates*

Magistrates themselves. And, if I might bear sway, I would think it reasonable, that in populous Cities there should be Theatres appointed for such Spectacles. Thus Montaigne: and where is the man's challenge now, as though there were none, that either did, or durst oppose him? Certainly we may truly say; the Saying is verified of him, *Scientia non habet Inimicum præter Ignorantem: Veresundia non habet Inimicum præter Impudentem.*

But when all is said, that can be: this is his *Murus Aeneus*, that he saith no more, then what *Tertullian*, and *Saint Cyprian*, and many other most Zealous, and Learned men, have said before. It is true indeed, *Tertullian*, and *Saint Cyprian*, two shining Lights in the Church of God, have both of them written Treatises *De spectaculis*, concerning Shews, and Plays; and I could wish they were in *English*, that the world might see a strange thing to wonder at: which is, that this man saith almost nothing material of Plays, which he hath not from them, and yet, where they write most learnedly,

learnedly, he saith the same thing, and yet writes most ignorantly: where they write exceeding devoutly, he saith the same thing, and yet writes exceeding maliciously: where they shew in their writing *great judgment, and discretion*: he saith the same thing, and yet shews nothing but *Vanity*, and gross simplicity.

One would wonder how this should happen, but this is the matter: Circumstances in matters *Moral* enter common often times with the substance it self, or rather indeed become very parts of the substance; which these Fathers have most duly observed: but this man goes away with the substance, as *Sampson* with the Gates of *Azzah*, and leaves the Circumstances all behinde him: and so, whilst he thinks he hath the substance of the matter; he hath not indeed the matter of the Substance. A few words will make it plain. *Tertullian* lived in the time of *Septimius Severus Emperour of Rome*: under whom was the *Fifth*, or *Sixth* Persecution against *Christians*

Christians: in the twelfth year of his Empire were proclaimed *Secular Plays* (so called, because they were solemnized but *semel in seculo*, once in an hundred years) and were dedicated to the honour of some of their *Heathen Gods*. *Tertullian* (conceiving it might breed great scandal to the *Christian Religion*, if *Christians* should resort unto them: and the *Heathen* being apt to insult, as though *Christians* had no pleasures in their own *Religion*, but were fain to come for pleasures to them) writes a Treatise, exhorting all *Christians* to forbear these *Plays*; and useth indeed many *Excellent*, and weighty *Reasons*, that these *Plays* were full of *Idolatrie*, and Superstition, and therefore they could not go to see them, but they must become as *Accessaries*, and partakers with them in their *Idolatrie*: that they were full of licentious *Beastliness*, as wherein men, and women were brought in, naked upon the Stage, using many *Libidinous*, and *Immodest* gestures; that themselves were now in Persecution

on, fitter to *mourn*, then to be *merry*, fitter to wring their hands with compunction, then to clap their hands at a *Plaudite*; that they might bethink themselves of greater pleasures in their own Religion, *their Reconcilement with God, their Redemption by Christ, their Hope of Heaven*, and such like. Now, what man of our *Ministers*, if he had been in *Tertullian's* place would not have written of these *Plays*, as *Tertullian* did: yet what man of our *Ministers*, as our *Plays* are now, would once have offered to open his mouth against them? They were *Idolatrous*; ours, meerly *Moral*: they, dedicated to *Heathen Gods*; ours, dedicated only to honest *Recreation*: they, full of impious, and prophane Obscenity; ours, full only of civil Mirth: they, full of cruelty, and blood; ours, friendly, and quiet, lovingly maintaining mutual society: they, in time of *persecution*; ours, in time (for which we have cause to praise God) of *Peace*, and *Jubile*: they, Acted by *Heathen*, and amongst *Heathen*; ours, Acted by *Christians*, and amongst

amongst *Christians*. And now, let the world judg, whether there be not just cause to commend this *Father* for writing as he did, and yet to condemn this man for writing as he doth? For he duly observed all due Circumstances, but this man observes none; but is meerly a confused Lump, as if he were a man made out of the first *Chaos*, and were never descended from *Adam*, made of the Earth, when it was a distinct *Element*.

Although therefore he could say, that he saith nothing, but what others have said before, yet would this be no *Apologie* for him; seeing he saith it not in the same Times, nor amongst the same Persons, nor upon the same Occasions, nor with regard of any due Circumstance. And yet, this is not all; for is not his Book full of severe Censurings? of uncharitable Invectives? of far-fetch'd Applications? of opprobrious Language? of blemishing Imputations? But, suppose it were not, Is it nothing to gather the errours of former times, and

and to cast them upon the *Reformation* of the present time? Is it nothing to suck the *Ulcers* of Diseased persons, and then spit them all in the face of his Countrey? Is it nothing to obtrude his own mistakings for truths; and that to the scandal of the whole *nation*? Is it nothing to perswade the world, that (*Fol.* 61, & 568.) we profess to be *Christians*, but are none, as maintaining *Heathenish*, and *Idolatrous* Customes? Is it nothing (*Fol.* 149.) to sow seeds of *Suspicion*, and *Jealousies* in the peoples hearts, as if all were out of order, both in *Church*, and *Common-wealth*? Is it nothing for a private man, to take upon him to be *Censor morum*, in matters both *Civil*, and *Ecclesiastical*? If these things should be suffered, every *Korah*, and *Dathan* would be controlling of *Moses*, and *Aaron*; every *Jack Straw* would be giving *Laws* to his *Prince*; every *Dreamer* would be an *Enthusiast*, as if another *Montanus* were come amongst us: but I forbear to aggravate faults already censured,

Quas meruit pœnas, jam dedit illud opus.

Onely

Onely add this as a *Corollary* to all, that hath been said, If *Plays* be neither guilty of *Idolatry*, nor *obscenity*, then is his *Book* guilty both of *malice*, and *slander*; but they are neither *Idolatrous* in any sort, as all men will acknowledge, nor *Obscene* in the sort he would make them, as no man can deny; and therefore what is his *Book* but a very unmannerly *surmise* for the maner, and a very filthy *Impostume* for the matter. And now, that you have heard this *Negative Argument* to absolve *Plays*; you may be pleased to hear one *Affirmative Argument*, to make them absolute, and it shall be cut after his own fashion, if that will please him.

That exercise is most worthy to be frequented, in which both profit, and pleasure may be had together: but such are *Plays*, therefore most worthy to be frequented. The *Major* is proved thus,

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.

The *Minor* thus,

Et prodesse volunt, & delectare Poëta.

There remains onely a short *Paraphrase*

phrase upon this *Argument*, and then
Dixi.

For should we not wrong *Plays*, if we did onely *defend* them, and did not *commend* them? To leave them *non Laudatos*, were to leave them *Illaudatos*: and they deserve not onely an *Apologie*, but an *Encomium*. As therefore it is said of *Images*, that they are the *Books* of such as cannot read; so we may say of *Plays*, that they are the *Scholes* of such as cannot studie, and teach that with ease and delight, which in other courses cannot be attained without much pain, and labour. And let not the *Name* abuse you, as if you were at *play*, when you are at a *Play*; for though the *Name* be but a *Jest*, yet is there in *good earnest* much *earnest good* to be learned from thence by due *observation*. Certainly, the very scope of *Plays* in *Christian times*, hath ever been addressed to the magnifying of *Virtue*; or to make notorious the foulness, and deformity of *Vice*; wherein indeed they have an ability, then any other course far more enforcing. For where-

as the common man is drawn to love *Virtue*, not so much by the love of *Virtue*, as by the love of *Happiness*, which grows out of *Virtue*; and to hate *Vice*, not so much for the hate of *Vice*, as for the hate of *Miseries*, that flow out of *Vice*: it must necessarily follow, that what doth most manifest such happiness, or such miseries, must needs, to *Virtue*, or from *Vice*, be most enforcing; but this effect is far better wrought by *Plays*, the *Representation* of life, then by the life it self: seeing life, being casual, and tedious, doth neither always answer to desert; nor yet is easie to be observed, where the *Play* no sooner shews you the *Vice*, but it inflicts the *punishment*; no sooner the *Virtue*, but it bestoweth the *reward*. Besides, where *Laws* suppress faults, by making the faulty, punishable: *Plays* reclaim the faulty, by making the faults; if small, *ridiculous*, if great, *odious*.

Indeed, the *Passages* of the world are excellent *Glasses*, if they be had within reasonable distance, which, as it is the purpose of *Histories* to do by *Re-*
lation;

lation; so it is the purpose of *Plays* to do it by *Representation*, as *Cicero* saith, *Hæc conficta arbitror à Poetis esse, ut effictos mores nostros, expressamque imaginem nostræ quotidianæ vitæ videamus*: *Plays*, I conceive, were devised by *Poets* for this purpose; that in them, as in a *Glass*, we might see the maners, and very *Image* of our daily life. *Plays* indeed are *Glasses* of the Passages, and Actions of the world: and it is unhappy for *Glasses*, when they fall into the hands of *Ill-favoured* faces; for they may chance to lay the *Illfavouredness* of their faces upon the *Glasses*: and just so it is with this man; for he lays all the blame of the world's bad actions upon *Plays*, where he ought rather to lay all the blame of *Plays* bad actions upon the world: for, if the world were good, *Plays* would be good; but, if the world be bad, *Plays* are but the *Glasses*, they do but their kinde to represent it as it is; and therefore no fault of theirs, if they be bad too.

But he cannot abide to hear talk of *Representations*, he finds no difference between

tween real committing a Sin, and representing it. But have we not even in *Scripture* some *Examples*, (which we may apply with reverence) that things which cannot without *indecenty* be done, may yet without *indecenty* be represented? Can there be a more beastly, a more shamefull act, then to shew one's self stark naked before all people? yet the *Prophet Esay* did so; and did so three years together: and though in it self it were a shamefull act, yet in him it was not so; because he did it for *representation*. Can there be a more foul, or foolish act, then for a man purposely to marry a *Whoor*, and to have children of *Fornications*? yet the *Prophet Hosea* did so: and, though in it self it were a most foolish act; yet in him it was not so, because he did it for *representation*. And may we not then draw from hence not only an *Apologie* for *Plays*, by reason of their lawfulness, but an *Encomium* also, by reason of their *forcibleness*? And for this cause the great *Schole-man*, *Thomas Aquinas*, saith, and saith it in this

K 2

very

very case. *Poeticæ Fabulæ* idcirco inventæ sunt, ut mortales adducerent ad virtutis ad-
 eptionem, ac *Vitii* fugam, ad quæ simplices
 homines melius repræsentationibus, quàm ra-
 tionibus inducuntur. Plays were invented to
 this purpose, that men might the better be
 drawn to embrace *Virtue*, and to flie *Vice*;
 to which they are much better drawn by re-
 presentations, then by reasons.

But he would be thought very devout;
 he stands upon it, that we have other, far
 better, more *Crystalline Glasses* then
 Plays, even *Scriptures*, the *Word of God*,
 and *Preachers*, the *Ministers of the Word*
 of God, &c. As though, because the *Sun*
 is a glorious Light of God's making,
 we might not use a *Torch* of our own
 making, when the *Sun* is down? The
Scriptures indeed are *Divine Rules*, God's
 Word is a *Lanthorn* to our feet, and a *Light*
 to our paths, and *Preachers* are sublime
Schole-masters, who sit in *Moses Chair* to
 instruct us; and I could wish with this
 man, that *Prayers*, & *Sermons* were more
 frequented, and *Plays* less; but yet not
 with this man's minde, as though every
 one,

one, that goes to a *Play*, were damned: but because *Plays* are but of *Humane invention*, and may miscarry in that they intend; *Sermons* are of *Divine institution*, and have a *promise of Grace* annexed; and of which it is said, That *Faith comes by hearing*. We see *Plays* but to refresh our *Spirits*; but we hear *Sermons* to sanctifie our *Spirits*: we see *Plays* but as a *bodily recreation*; but we hear *Sermons* as a *spiritual edification*; which yet I speak not to make *comparison*, but to shew there is no *comparison* to be made. They are *non eodem nominanda die*. But yet they are no *Glassès*; he can never make a *Glass* of a *Pulpit*, as we may do of a *Stage*; that may teach us to know our selves, but it cannot shew us to see our selves: this is onely done by *representation*, which is the proper Office, and work of *Plays*. If therefore we could make true use of *Plays*, as *Plays* do their parts to offer it unto us, we should not onely in them see our *faults*, but by them learn to amend our *faults*; and though we attribute not unto them a

power of working *spiritual Grace*, which is proper to the *Pulpit*; yet we may attribute to them a means of working *Moral Virtue*, which may be common to the *Stage*. Here he falls to exclaiming, (for he is excellent at loud exclamations) [*Fol. 733.*] *Oh, let it never be heard of in Gath, nor published in Askelon; [Fol. 101.] for who can be so grossly stupid, to think to learn any Grace, or Virtue from a Play-house? Who ever sought for Pearls in Dirt; or for a Crystal Spring in filthy Mire? with many such, no less impertinent, then Pathetical Interrogatories; which he would use, if he were but speaking of a Goose's going bare-foot. Indeed he bears himself very high; as if he were the onely Atlas to bear up the Firmament of Virtue; and that we are all children of the Giants, that fight against God, and all goodness: but we let him know, (if at least he will learn) that we honour Virtue as much sincerely, as he would seem to do, and we seek to advance Virtue by more ways, then he directs how to do. We acknowledge*
Prayer

Prayer the most sovereign means; then reading of *Scriptures*; then hearing of *Sermons*; then conferring with learned *Ministers*; then conversing with Religious *Persons*: but yet we exclude not inferior helps; for seeing all the means we can use is little enough, why should we neglect any means, though never so mean? And indeed, as *Seneca* said of *Epicurus*, *Malè audit, infamis est, sed immeritò*: He hath an ill report, and is infamous, yet undeservedly: (for though he made *Pleasure* the *Summum Bonum*, yet he meant a *Pleasure* flowing out of *Virtue*) so we may say of *Plays*; *Malè audiunt, infames sunt, sed immeritò*: They have an ill Name, and are infamous, but undeservedly: for though they be in shew but *Pleasures*, yet they bring a profit with them, and conduce to *Virtue*. And seeing *Heathen* men might have, and oftentimes had in great eminency *Moral Virtues*, to what may we impute it more, then to their seeing of *Plays*? For, though *Philosophy* gave them the *Rules*, and *Histories* told them the *Tales*,

yet *Plays* onely shewed them the *Ex-
amples*, which gave the life to *both* the
other. For *Rules* of *Philosophy* are but
dead Lessons, and *Tales* of *Histories*
make but light impressi^on; the *Viva
vox*, and *Action* of the *Player*, is as a
Lesson in *Musick*, played unto us by the
Master; and as a Seal upon both Sense,
and Understanding, the *Print* whereof
is reciprocally carried from one to the
other with infinite *repercussions*. *Rules*
of *Philosophy*, though they be good *Di-
rections*, yet they want one to lead us
by the hand; they bring us onely to
Video meliora, probaque, and then leave us
to *Deteriora sequor*: where *Plays* do not
onely shew us the *Right*, but lead us in
it; not onely tell us the way, but tread
it out before us. Reading of *Histories*,
though it be pleasing to the Understanding,
yet it is wearisome to the Sense;
neither is the Understanding it self so
much wrought upon by that we read,
as by what we hear, and see; and this
makes *Plays* to be of far more use, and
profit then *Histories*; because in them
we

we have *absolutely* the help of one Sense more, and the help of the other Sense with far more force, and greater contentment. And as for the Understanding, it is not onely sooner, and better *Informed*, but is *Dilated* also, and made both more *capable*, and more *capacious*, by seeing of *Plays*, then by reading of Histories: seeing in these the *Phantasie*, receiving it onely from the dead Book, and doing it all, it self alone, can be but faint in *delivering* it to the Understanding: where, in *Plays*, the *Seeing* prompts the *Hearing*, and the *Hearing* prompts the *Seeing*, and they both joyn together, to present it to the *Fantastie*, which, receiving it with vigour, with vigour transmits it to the Understanding. I might quickly here grow tedious, if I should follow the *Matter*, and not observe *Form*, but seeing too long *Walks*, though never so pleasant, may be *weari-some*, I will make a stand here; onely shewing, what an *Hill* is behinde to be ascended, if, after private profits, I should proceed to speak of publick *Benefits*:

nests: proving how necessary it is, that
 the multitude, who live by their labours
 should have Recreations allowed them
 to sweeten their pains: and that of all
 Recreations, hitherto invented, there is
 not any, for many Considerations, so
 worthy the embracing, as this of *Plays*:
 it is a *general* delight, general to *Sex*, to
Age, to *Quality*; it is an *innocent* delight,
 innocent in *Deed*, and in *Occasion*; it is a
cheap delight, it ventures nothing, and
 spends but little; it is a *sociable* delight,
 many do at once enjoy it, and all equal-
 ly; it is a *ready* delight, without wast of
 time, or trouble of waiting; it is a *refresh-*
ing delight, it becalms the Spirits, where
 most other delights make the Pulses
 beat: it is a delight both to *Sense*, and
Reason: and, of the Senses, more then one
 more then one way do at once partake
 it: and as for the *Reasons*, we may truly
 say of *Plays*, that they *enlarge* it by *Di-*
scourses, *quicken* it by *Conceits*, and *direct*
 it by *Examples*. These are some reasons
 of many, to shew there is just cause,
 why *Plays* should, and may delight us:

but

but to shew, that they do indeed delight us, what can be alledged better then that, which *Cicero* saith, *Quid ego dicam populum, ac vulgus imperitorum ludis magnopere delectari? quanquam id huic causa satis est; sunt enim populi, ac multitudinis Comitia: What should I speak of the delight, which common people take in Plays? of which we need seek no further reason then this, that they are the Marts of the people. And lest you should think it a base delight, as delighting onely the base multitude: hear what he saith further, and saith it not onely as a Witness, but as a Party, making it a delight even of States-men: Et nosmetipsi, qui ob delectatione omni negotiis impedimur; & in ipsa occupatione delectationes alias multas habere possumus, ludis tamen oblectamur, & ducimur: Even we our selves, who by reason of employments are hindred from taking of any delight, and in the employments themselves may have many other delights; yet are we also affected, and taken with the delight of Plays. And what will you say, if this man himself, who hath spoken so reproachfully*

proachfully all this while of *Plays*, and would make us believe (*Fol. 724.*) that none but *lowd people* are delighted with them, even he also can be proved to delight in *Plays*? You would think it strange: yet hear what *Cicero* saith to this point too, and that upon his credit: *Delectant homines, mihi crede, ludi, non eos solum, qui fatentur, sed illos etiam, qui dissimulant: Plays, believe me, delight all: not them onely that confess it, but even them that would deny it, and do dissemble it.* And who doubts, but that we shall finde this man amongst the Oratour's *Dissemblers*?

But to make an *End* with him, that never makes an end; seeing *Scriptures* in no kinde, *antient Fathers*, and *Councils*, not in our kinde, have ever condemned *Plays*: seeing no *Reasons* of any force can be brought against them, and many may be alledged for them; seeing they rather deserve *Commendation*, then need *Defence*, I hope to finde none either in *Judgment* so weak, or so strong in *Passion*, as to set his hand
to

to this man's *pen*, or to lend his voice to this man's throat, in making *Outcries* against *Plays*; but that he will be content, as to see the wide world drawn in a *Map*, and a large *History* in an *Abridgment*; so to see, and favour *Plays*, which are nothing, but *Epitomes* of the World's behaviour.

F I N I S.